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LOSS.

BY MARY CLEMMER.

Only so much the less—
One heart has fallen away:
It took no light from the sun,
No splendor out of the day
The sunshine seems the same,
And the opal tints on the sea,
And the golden rod's yellow flame—
Yet something has gone from me.

One heart, one heart the less,
When I name the name of my friends:
One love that seemed born to bless,
In a mirage of falsehood ends.
The sunshine seems the same,
And the opal tints on the sea,
And the golden-rod's yellow flame—
Yet something is gone from me.

Almost Sacrificed:

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BARBARA GRAHAM," "TWICE MARRIED," "MABEL MAY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"DID you want me, sir? Mrs. Selwyn said you were inquiring for me."

"Yes, Alwynne, I do. I have news of importance for you. Sit down. I must just finish reading this letter, and then I can talk to you."

Alwynne Compton obeyed for some minutes there was silence.

Yet the loud beatings of the lad's heart might have been almost distinguished in the perfect stillness.

The announcement was sufficient to send young and ardent blood bounding impatiently through the veins, and to hasten its beautiful pulsations.

"News of importance."

It is a thrilling notice for the busy politician, for the passer-by in the streets, for the gravest and least interested.

No wonder that it taxed the patience of an impatient youth to wait for the announcement that was to concern him so especially.

The minutes seemed endless.

Then the long, closely-written letter was finished, folded, replaced in its envelope, and Mr. Nugent, moving his chair slightly from the table, turned at last to his young companion.

"Alwynne, this letter is from your uncle and godfather. He writes to me to inquire about you, and makes a proposal on your behalf."

The boy laughed half bitterly.

"Time enough for such kindly interest," he said.

"Except my antediluvian Saxon name and a silver cup on which it is deeply engraved, I have never had any token that my father's brother remembered or knew that I, his only nephew and godson, was in existence."

"Well, he means to make up for it now," said the gentleman, deprecatingly.

"He has made a very liberal offer here. He proposes for you to go out to him immediately, and, to use his own expression 'finish your medical studies among the Hindoos; they are far better doctors than our poisoning leeches'

"And he adds, fairly and frankly enough that 'if you satisfy his just and moderate expectations and wishes he intends to adopt you as his heir.'

"There, my boy—you are nabob-elect, you see, before you are seventeen. Just as you were first at Harrow at fifteen—rapid work, eh, Alwynne?"

But the boy did not reply.

His face was flushed and excited, but not altogether with pleasurable excitement or gratified ambition.

There was pain and even bitterness mingled with the gush of proud exultation at the golden prospect opening before him.

"You wish me to go, sir?"

"Wish? Why, my boy, should I be in my senses were I to wish otherwise? Of course you do not hesitate for a moment?"

"I prefer independence, could I secure it to hanging on a rich relative's fancies," was the boy's reply.

"If my uncle wishes for a hero, he will be deceived; if for a grateful and respectful nephew, he shall not complain. It is a risk, Mr. Nugent, for him and for me, but I shall be ready to obey if you think it proper that I should accept the offer."

The excellent but somewhat blunt country gentleman gazed in the face of his ward with something very like alarm.

"Alwynne, my boy, I hope learning has not touched your brain.

"I should scarcely hesitate for a son of my own.

"But come—let us go over the letter together, and then you can judge for yourself.

"We must reply by the next mail, and therefore it is as well to arrange all while we are on the subject;" and Mr. Nugent drew his chair nearer to the table, and, opening the letter laid it before them both on the table.

"Now, my dear boy, remember that your uncle's fortune from your poor father is fifteen thousand dollars, of which one must certainly go to establish you in your profession. Well, your uncle engages to reimburse any loss you may incur in consequence of complying with his demands; and the chances are decidedly in favor of your becoming his heir ere you reach manhood.

"Read the note again, Alwynne; weigh it in your mind while I write answers to my other letters, and then let me know your decision;" and, giving up the letter to his ward, Mr. Nugent returned to his usual post at the library table and began to write.

* * * * * *

Another part of Mr. Nugent's luxurious country house—which was surrounded by gardens and shrubberies and a miniature park of singular beauty—an elegant boudoir.

The piano, the harp, the work-frames, the davenport, the cabinets of well-selected curiosities, the well-filled book-cases, all proved that this was no room for the indulgence of mere luxurious ease and indolence but the retiring-room for the private hours and occupations of a woman of taste, accomplishment and industry.

All within it spoke of wealth and discernment, but all spoke also of that refinement of mind which is far superior to mere fancy, and the boudoir was, for once, a true indication of the character of its inmate.

Mrs. Nugent, the fair mistress of the little domain named Temple Nugent, was as perfect in her way as the apartment which was her favorite resting-place for the chief portion of her mornings.

She was a beautiful brunette—a rare specimen of that much-misrepresented class—not sallow, or Spanish, or Italian, or Indian in complexion, with large dark eyes surrounded by deep black circles, but a woman with the clearest of skins, which only escaped being fair from the warm tint that gave a softer coloring to the complexion, and eyes that, when examined closely, proved to be those rare and perfect orbs which combine the peculiarities of the three great divisions blue, gray, and black, and hair that was not black, harsh, raven black, but the richest and softest deep brown.

The whole face was the very personification of softness, and yet softness combined with intellect and feeling.

Both very lovely and very lovable was Constance Nugent, and yet an indefinable melancholy hovered in the atmosphere that surrounded her.

Her face seldom sparkled with joy, her voice had a languid gentleness in its tone, and her smile was rather sweet than gay.

The observer felt a sort of reverent love and admiration, as if in the presence of a being from another sphere.

Perhaps Mrs. Nugent could have explained the phenomenon—she and one other; but that other was not her fine-hearted and excellent husband.

Near the lady, seated on the floor, surrounded by almost a pattern of blossoms and glittering green leaves, was a little girl—her only child.

Clara was not the miniature of her mother; still she might grow like, very like, that lady in after years.

The hair would deepen into the same rich, rare tint; the skin would only differ from its more defined fairness and pinker, brighter glow; and the eyes, albeit more flashing, and of a violet rather than gray color, might soften into the thoughtful, expressive beauty of her mother.

But there were passion, and intellect, and exceeding susceptibility of impression, and delicacy of temperament, to be read in that precocious child's face, even though scarcely more than eight summers had passed over the lovely features.

At this moment they expressed nothing but joyous delight at the floral treasures that lay heaped around her.

"Mamma, why does not Alwynne come? He promised to help me with the flowers. No one makes them into such pretty garlands as he does."

Mrs. Nugent smiled sadly, very sadly, as she replied—

"Alwynne is with your papa, my darling, reading letters from India which arrived this morning.

"He will not be long, I dare say, for your papa has an engagement with Mr. Le Grande in an hour from this time."

And the lady glanced at the time-piece on the mantel.

The child frowned, a strange, thoughtful frown that spoke rather of deep annoyance than childish vexation.

"Mamma, why does papa go to Mr. Le Grande so often?"

"Because he is a clever and an agreeable man, and your papa likes him little critic," replied the lady, smiling, though a shadow gathered over her face at the childish remark.

"Why did you ask such a queer question, Clara?"

"I do not like Mr. Le Grande's manner, and I do not like Eleanor," avowed the child.

"I don't want them to come so often, and I'm sure Alwynne does not."

"What is it that Alwynne does not want, and whom is he so inhospitably unwilling to see?" spoke a boyish voice behind little Clara.

She started round, and impetuously sprang into the arms of a tall, handsome youth of perhaps sixteen years according to the register, though by a casual observer at least another year would be added to his age.

"Oh, Alwynne, I am so glad you are come. The flowers are drooping and fading already. Do make haste and sit down here while I tell you what I want you to do with them."

The youth looked down on the fair child with a fond but sad gaze.

"Forgive me, little Clara, but I must put off arranging your flowers until this afternoon.

"I want to speak to your mamma just now.

"Will you take your treasures to Bennett and tell her how to put them together? And I will see how much you have improved since we did them last week. Hurry away, little Clara."

"Go, my child," was the gentle command of the mother in support of the request.

Clara seldom disobeyed her mother's will.

She gathered up the flowers in her lap, and slowly walked from the room muttering—

"I hate those Indian letters; they always make Alwynne forget me."

Both the lady and the youth smiled.

"You have spoiled her, Alwynne. She is a complete little tyrant over you. But what news has the mail brought you, my dear boy?"

"Very bad—and yet very good, as the world would call it," he replied, sadly. "My uncle has sent for me to make me his heir.

"But I would give up all such prospects if I might remain in England for at least two or three years longer."

Mrs. Nugent scanned the boy's face.

"Why, Alwynne? You must have some reason for wishing to risk such a golden prospect, and at your age too. Why are you so anxious to wait for that especial time preferring to remain under Mr. Le Grande's tuition, poring over medical books, instead of revelling in the Oriental luxuries that your uncle's heir will command?"

She spoke playfully, but there was an earnest look in her eyes that brought an indignant flush to Alwynne's dark cheek.

"I do not like leaving you, my more than mother," he said, at last, throwing himself down by her couch on the floor, and taking her hand with the fond, adoring tenderness of an idolising son; "you cannot deceive me, and I do not pretend to deceive you," he added, half coloring, half laughing as she shook her head incredulously, "for I am in love with you, mother."

"Is it Eleanor Le Grande or your adopted mother with whom you are in love?" asked Mrs. Nugent, significantly.

The lad flushed crimson.

"Miss Le Grande has far higher aims than her father's pupil and your adopted ward," he said, haughtily.

"Yet she is very beautiful, Alwynne, and you have been very intimate with her."

"She is very like her mother," observed Alwynne; and his quiet gaze was fixed for a moment on the face of his fair companion.

"Yes, she is very like her mother," repeated the lady, slowly.

"Mrs. Le Grande is very handsome, and very clever. She has educated Eleanor herself and——"

She stopped, apparently in doubt as to whether she should speak out her thought. Alwynne watched her attentively.

"Mother darling—a fair exchange. If I confess my secret, will you confess yours?"

"Mine, Alwynne?"

"Yes, yours, dearest lady. I have not been your loving and devoted son and Mr. Le Grande's pupil for nothing. I guess your secret, and you need not fear to confide it to me.

"I am a man in feeling and in discernment, though not in years. Will you not trust me?"

Tears flowed gently and silently down the fair cheeks.

"Has Mr. Le Grande ever hinted anything to you, Alwynne?"

"Never; he has been too ill for some weeks to speak of any but thoroughly professional subjects, and he would think me an unsafe depository of the secret. But you know me better."

"Is he very ill, Alwynne?" asked Mrs. Nugent, absently.

"Very.

"I do not think he can survive the next attack; but it may be some time before it retu"

"Paralysis is such an uncertain and deceitful seizure."

"And he is old," mused the lady.

"Yes; I have often wondered at his marrying so young and handsome a woman, especially as he has so little property," remarked Alwynne.

"But all this is not to the purpose, fair mother. Will you agree to barter secrets with me?"

"But I can guess yours, Alwynne. You are in love with Eleanor Le Grande; but she is too proud and careless to encourage the affection you cannot help feeling for her. Is it not so? And, if you came back as the heir of an Indian millionnaire, you would try whether the statue would not warm into life at your bidding. Well, it is not wonderful.

The lad looked half amused, half reproachful.

"You do not think what you say, mother. Listen, and I will tell you both your secret and my own."

And he stooped over the sofa on which she reclined and spoke for some minutes eagerly, and in a low voice that could only reach the ears of the person to whom the words were addressed.

Those words brought varied expressions to the lady's face; surprise, grief, pleasure, affection, grateful trust, succeeded each other in rapid succession.

And when the youth had ceased speaking she drew from her finger an antique ring of peculiar form and workmanship which she always wore, and held it towards him.

It was a ring composed of one pearl of exceptional size, round which where set, pear shape, small diamonds of great value.

"Alwynne," she said, "from this instant the bond that has so long existed between us is cancelled, to give place to one entirely different in character.

"I place in your hands a sacred trust, to be returned in after years if occasion requires.

"If my cousin's presentments are realized, if our fears prove correct, and if your feelings remain unchanged, then remember that you receive with that ring the confidence and the power that you desire at my hands.

"That ring, which has been in my family from time immemorial, my mother wore to her dying day.

"It has always been to me a sacred heirloom, and with it have ever been connected the heart histories and the destiny of the women of my race for many a long generation.

"Alwynne, never let it leave your keeping save in the event of which you spoke just now, unless I claim it at your hands. My heart is lighter in spite of your approaching departure, my boy; for I feel now that the spell is broken that has bound my thoughts and words for so many months.

"At least the evil influences that threaten me and mine are not wholly suppositious or unknown.

"May Heaven bless you, my adopted son even as you fulfil the trust you have voluntarily assumed."

"Amen," responded the youth.

There was silence for some minutes, and then Alwynne resumed, in a more cheerful tone—

"This is all very unnecessary, dearest mother, I hope and believe.

"The event on which it all hangs is one that may Heaven forbid should happen for many a long year; and, as you know my own movements are not as yet under my uncle, should it please him to make overtures of peace: and when I am once under his control I can scarcely answer for the future.

"But I pledge you my word that ere any decisive event can occur to affect the future of——"

He was scarcely more pleased than surprised at the sudden opening of the door even as he spoke, and the appearance of a lady of "gorgeous" figure and face dressed in a walking costume that, although by no means in bad taste, was yet too "full-blown" for the refined society she had entered.

No other words would so well describe the appearance Mrs Le Grande.

The lady was tall, and of full and dignified figure and bearing, with rather open features, that could at any moment be toned down at pleasure by a bland softness of look and manner; and there was something that gave a peculiar idea of amplitude in the folds of her dress, the extension of her mantle and skirts, and even sleeves, that scarcely belonged to the mere physical development of her figure.

It was a peculiarity about Margaret Le Grande that almost overpowered all other ideas at first sight of her really handsome face and form.

But with many this feeling subsided on a more intimate acquaintance.

The extreme softness and blandness of her manner; the interest that she always displayed in the persons and subjects with whom and which she was concerned; and the distant connection and great influence which she boasted with the owners of Temple Nugent—all rendered Mrs. Le Grande one of the most popular women in the neighborhood, to say nothing of the country round.

But when there is added to these elements the fact that her daughter Eleanor—now a young lady of about sixteen years—was a refined and improved and far more attractive image of the said lady, the wonder will cease that any one who dared to call Mrs. Le Grande by any less complimentary epithet than "a very fine woman," or "a charming woman," would instantly have been tabooed as slanderous or wanting in taste.

She was a distant and humble cousin of the fair Constance Nugent; and it had been by her influence and kindly exertions that the struggling apothecary whom Margaret had thought an excellent match when a laborious governess in a secluded country village, had obtained the practice and had taken a respectable position in the neighborhood of his wife's grand relatives.

Such was the lady who, noiselessly and familiarly, entered the boudoir of Mrs. Nugent.

"My dearest Constance, how are you today?

"I need scarcely ask, you look so blooming, and your eyes are so brilliant."

Mrs. Nugent laughed.

"You should have been a man, Margaret—you have such a faculty for paying compliments."

"I? No one less so. My great fault is an unlucky candor.

"I never can disguise the truth, even when it is most necessary.

"It is with the greatest difficulty that I keep myself from letting my poor Louis know of his danger; and of course it cannot be easily concealed from myself."

"Then you are aware of the risk?" questioned Alwynne, mildly.

"Of course.

"Can you suppose that I am blind to what the most ignorant could scarcely fail to apprehend?" she said, with a tinge of sharpness in her tone foreign to her usual manner.

"Certainly not; only Mr. Le Grande hinted to me the complete unconsciousness you displayed of the slightest chance of any present danger," he replied, significantly.

The soft cheek wore a slight, a very slight deepening of the usual faultless bloom; but she only said, carelessly—

"Ah, it is the happy privilege of disease to ignore its own existence, especially when any chance of sudden danger or death exists. Do you not think so, Constance?"

Mrs. Nugent was silent for a few moments.

Then she said, in her calm sweet tones—

"No, Margaret, I do not think it would be a happy privilege if it existed; and I am sure that it is a mistake to suppose that it does.

"But where is Eleanor?

"Is she well?"

"Oh yes, perfectly well, thank you; she turned back with your husband, Constance. We met him on his way to the Grange, and of course we could not let him go to a lonely house with only an invalid to receive him.

"I should have accompanied him but that I wished to congratulate our dear Alwynne on his news.

"We shall miss him sadly, and some tears will be shed that will not be easily dried after his departure."

But Alwynne Compton had left the room and the lady's sweet sympathies were wasted so far as he was concerned.

"Yes, we shall miss him exceedingly. Clara will be inconsolable, and Alwynne himself will be very lonely without his little playmate," said Mrs. Nugent, calmly.

"Clara—oh yes, of course! Between ourselves, Constance, I suspect that Eleanor will be a great deal more affected on the occasion than she will care to acknowledge. She is very proud; but I can see Alwynne's constant attentions have won on her heart, and now I almost dread the truth of what I thoughtlessly encouraged. He appeared so young, and Eleanor is so extremely correct and refined in her ideas, that I felt perfectly safe in trusting them together; and long engagements are so undesirable."

"Make yourself perfectly safe on that point, Margaret," was the calm reply. "I believe Clara will be the only sweetheart that Alwynne will engage himself to ere he leaves; and even you must confess that there can be no danger in that."

Mrs. Le Grande laughed lightly.

"Ah no; where an heiress is concerned there is little fear that such entanglements can be dangerous.

"But we are talking like two foolish school-girls, Constance, and I came on really serious business.

"I wanted to ask you to receive Eleanor for a few weeks.

"Mr. Le Grande is ordered to Cheltenham in the hope of restoring the use of his limbs, and I cannot afford the expense of taking Eleanor; nor can I suffer the inconvenience which a young girl neither out of nor yet fairly in the school-room is sure to entail.

"Of course I did not know of this unexpected news when I set out."

"It need not alter the plan, Margaret," said Mrs. Nugent, though a slight shade of annoyance crossed her face.

"Alwynne will leave by the next mail and I suppose your plans will hardly be matured before then.

"Well, no—I scarcely can tell. It all depends on Mr. Le Grande himself and on our being able to get comfortable apartments.

"I shall not lose a day; and indeed I rather intended to beg you to receive Eleanor the day after to-morrow.

"Mr. Nugent kindly said there could be no difficulty, but of course it is only the lady of the house who can answer in such cases."

Mr. Nugent's reply would have risen very quickly to her lips had she been gifted with the amiable candor of Mrs Le Grande. But, as she was simply truthful, without any wish to obtrude the whole of the said truth on her friends and acquaintances, at the risk of offending and wounding unnecessarily, she merely said—

"We can receive Eleanor, Margaret, but I cannot promise her much attention, or even pleasure on her visit.

"We shall be necessarily much occupied with Alwynne till he goes, and we shall not be very cheerful when he has taken his departure."

"Why, it will be but too congenial under the circumstances.

"Eleanor is passionately fond of her father; and his state, and her old friend's departure, will leave little room for further regret.

"But I must leave you now that my errand is accomplished.

"I have so much to do and—— I hear the carriage. You are going to drive, I dare say, Constance."

"I am going to Lidford, but merely to do a little shopping, Margaret. You need not hasten on that account."

"Thank you.

"To Lidford, you say?

"Perhaps you would just call at the French dressmaker's for me, and tell her to send home Eleanor's dress to-morrow.

"She promised it last week.

"Good-bye.

"I shall be late."

And the lady hurried away.

Constance remained in deep and painful thought for a few minutes.

Then she walked to the large pier-glass between the windows, and took a long survey of her face in the mirror.

Her hand was clasped on her side as she gazed, and her bosom heaved painfully for a few minutes.

Was she admiring her own beauty, or contrasting it with the gorgeous splendor of her late visitor?

There was a look of strange unearthly sadness in her face which spoke of resignation, but scarcely peace.

It seemed as if some trial she dreaded was almost too much for her fortitude, and yet not for her humble faith.

The entrance of her maid with her bonnet and cloak roused her.

She hastily submitted to the brief toilette that was necessary, and in less than a quarter of an hour from the departure of Mrs. Le Grande she was driving from Temple Nugent.

Her thoughts were almost too sad for her to indulge her usual admiration of the familiar scenery, which yet had lost none of its charms for her by long acquaintanceship.

She leaned back in the carriage, scarcely conscious of the rapidly passing objects till she reached a cross road that led to various points in the neighborhood.

One was the Grange, and another was Lidford, almost at right angles with it; and Constance instinctively glanced in the direction of a place that was certainly occupying much of her thoughts.

It was but a glance, yet it brought a sudden flush to her face.

Two figures were walking in the path which led by a private way to the residence of the Le Grandes—two familiar figures—her husband and Margaret Le Grande.

Why not?

Why should not two such intimate friends and distant relatives saunter leisurely in the sylvan path?

Was Constance jealous?

She had not the feeling, and certainly her loving and devoted husband had never given her cause to indulge it.

And yet the sight was exquisitely painful.

She leaned back in the carriage, and covered her eyes with her hands.

"Oh, Heaven spare me!" she murmured. "My darling, my Clara, my sweet innocent child—Heaven watch over and keep thee! Oh, it is hard to bear!"

* * * * * *

Constance Nugent's errand to Lidford was not a brief one.

She drove to one or two of the principal shops in the place, and then to a large handsome brick house on the outskirts of the town, where she remained some time. When she came out, a packet that had been in her hand on leaving the carriage had disappeared, and her face was flushed and weary-looking, as if she had been arranging some fatiguing and serious business.

But ere she arrived at Temple Nugent the wan look had disappeared.

The fresh air or the calm quiet drive had banished the pallid look of anxious pain. And as her husband handed her from the carriage, he even remarked on the beautiful bloom that had replaced the paleness of the morning.

"I never saw you looking better, dearest," he said.

"That bright color would grace a cheek of eighteen summers instead of eight-and-twenty.

"I shall get jealous of my young wife soon—I, an old fellow nearly forty."

Constance smiled gaily for a moment; then the old pang came that had more than once pained her that day, and kissing her husband as he gallantly escorted her within doors, she excused herself from further conversation on the ground of being late for dinner.

CHAPTER II.

CLARA, Clara, my darling, you must not—indeed you must not cry so bitterly. Remember, I shall come back long before you are a woman, and shall expect to find you as accomplished and good as your mamma.

"Will you try to be so, my pet? Instead of fretting for your old playfellow, think how pleased he will be to know that Clara is becoming all that he wishes."

"I shall never become that, Alwynne. I am not good.

"I cannot help it. If I love people I can do anything to please them, and be good; but, if not I hate them. I cannot help being naughty and passionate; and, if mamma and you were not here, I should never be good—I know I should not."

"Yes, Clara, for our sakes you would. Listen—you are but a child but you can understand a great deal; and I tell you that, if your mamma fancied that you would do her more harm than you can know at present, little Clara.

"And you must try not to be unhappy when I am gone, but take my place, and try to amuse your mamma, and not let her see you sad and crying. You can do this, Clara?"

"I will try."

"And now look here.

"I have cut off a piece of my hair for you to keep, Clara; and here is the picture that you used to say was like Alwynne, though I know it is a great deal handsomer. But it will do for your own little self, to keep in remembrance of your playmate till he sends you a better one from his distant home."

The child looked up suddenly.

"Not home, Alwynne—don't call it home!" she exclaimed, passionately.

He smiled, and gazed down in the depths of the eyes where the woman's heart seemed to shine.

"You are right, little Clara—England is my home, and Temple Nugent the dearest place in it. And now will you say good-bye bravely?"

She started.

"Good-bye, Alwynne!"

"Yes, my pet; your mamma thought you would be fretting all night if we told you before; but I am going to-day, my darling—my own sweet little pet."

And his late firmness forsook him. As he clasped the child in his arms, tears filled his dark eyes.

Clara saw them, and even at the early age her womanly nature asserted itself.

If he grieved, she would not make him more sorrowful by letting him see that she was so broken-hearted.

Her little heart was bursting with grief, but she kept it back, and laid her face on his shoulder, that he might not see that she was crying.

"Now, Clara, my pet, let me take you to nurse."

And restraining his feelings, he carried the child to the nursery apartments, which looked out on the lawn, in the left wing of the house.

Clara clung to him convulsively, but she never said a word; and when he laid her on a couch by her kind old nurse her little face was pale and tearless.

"My darling, good-bye! Nurse, take care of my little favorite, and don't forget me."

And placing a handsome brooch in the good woman's lap, he shook hands with her heartily, and hurried quickly from the room.

Nurse turned to her charge. The child was white and motionless.

"Miss Clara—Miss Clara, my darling! Come, look up—speak to me!"

But the child did not reply or move.

"Bless my soul—why she has fainted! Pretty dear—for all the world like her dear mother.

"Well, well, Heaven help us all! There's no knowing what's in store; but I never saw a clearer case in my life. There's trouble for her, sweet pretty—that's clear. A child that can faint away at her age for grief won't go through life very smoothly. But I'll not tell my dear lady; she's sad enough without having more sorrow put in her life.

"I know and see more than those that talk and gossip over every trifle."

And, having thus expressed satisfaction at her own good and prudent management, Mrs. Selwyn proceeded to the task of reviving her nursling and especial darling.

* * * * * *

Two years had passed, and brought many changes to the inhabitants of Temple Nugent—sad and grievous changes.

The fair mistress of the domain had gone to her long and brighter home, and Clara was motherless.

It happened in this wise, that heart-crushing blow.

Mrs. Nugent had been, as usual, superintending Clara's coming tasks.

It was a labor of love, for Clara was an apt pupil, and, instead of shrinking from the solitary hours of study, she appeared to cling to them as her most happy moments, more especially since Eleanor Le Grande and her mother had been inmates of Temple Nugent; and, while Clara was closeted with her fair mother during her lessons, those ladies were not permitted to intrude on either.

Mrs. Le Grande and her daughter were visitors for an indinite period; for poor Mr. Le Grande was dead, and his widow and child had found a refuge at the home of their distant relative till something could be arranged.

Eleanor was too young to undertake teaching, and masters and yet severer study were needful to prepare her for such a task.

Mr. Nugent liberally offered money and a home till this object could be attained, and six months more were to elapse ere Eleanor would be eighteen, when she was to enter on her new life of labor and independence. Therefore it was that both Mrs. Nugent and Clara were happiest in the early morning solitary hours, when they were free from the possibility of the intrusion of their guests.

One morning they had lingered longer than usual.

Clara had begged to be allowed to finish a difficult Italian lesson, and Mrs. Nugent had assented with a smile of unusually tender sadness.

"Mamma, mamma, what is it? Are you not well?" exclaimed the child.

"Yes, as well as usual, darling; but you mustn't be long, for I promised to drive out with Mrs. Le Grande at two, and it is rather more than one now. I shall have my luncheon sent in here, however; I can-

not take much, and that only vexes your papa."

"Papa" had been far too often vexed of late, and Clara knew it, but she made no remark.

She was so wonderfully wise, that strange child.

The luncheon-tray was brought in, and Mr. Nugent soon followed it.

"Constance, why is this?"

"Only that I wanted to keep quiet till I went out with Margaret," she said, trying to smile.

"That is just it. You keep in such gloomy solitude that it is no wonder you fancy yourself ill. Clara, go to the nursery; I wish to speak with your mamma for a few minutes alone."

Clara obeyed reluctantly. She crossed to her mother's couch, and kissed her passionately again and again, with a fervor for which she could not account, till Mr. Nugent grew impatient.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Her Reward.

BY GEORGE ARNOLD.

SAIDEE! Saidee! Where are you? Why don't you answer me when I call?"

"Yes, aunt Leah—I am coming in a minute."

"In a minute!" sarcastically repeated the old lady. "It's always 'in a minute' with you, Saidee! But I suppose, because I am old and helpless, my comfort is a matter of no consequence whatever."

"Dear aunt Leah, you must never think that," answered a bright, cheery voice; and Saidee Lynn came into the room, with a little tray, where was arranged, on a snowy napkin, some tea-biscuits, half-a-dozen pink radishes, a few thin-cut shavings of smoked beef, and a little pot of tea, with a cup and saucer of old china that would have been invaluable to a collector. You see I had you in my mind all the time, aunt Leah," she said merrily. "I gathered the radishes from our own garden. Don't they look nice?"

Aunt Leah, a withered, little, old lady, in a dress of worn black silk, and sharp, grey eyes, peering through gold-bound spectacles, tasted the tea, and shook her head.

"It's too weak," said she. "It isn't fit to drink!"

"I put in all the tea there was in the canister, aunt Leah," said Saidee, with a distressed countenance.

Aunt Leah pushed away the cup, with an expression of distaste.

"It is as I might have expected," said she. "My nieces have too little thought for my comfort to study my poor and few necessities. Never mind the tea; I can drink cold water, I daresay."

Saidee wrung her hands in despair.

How could she tell this weak, feeble old lady, above whose declining years hung the threatening Damocles sword of heart-disease, of their narrowing circumstances—of the empty exchequer, the clamouring creditors, the pitiful straits to which they were reduced?

"What shall I do?" she asked herself, as she went slowly back to the little kitchen of the ruinous Gothic cottage, which they had obtained for a ridiculously low rent because it was ruinous. "I've borrowed of the rector's wife twice, and I'm ashamed to go there again, and I've sold everything I can lay my hands on. But," glancing up at a picture which hung in the hall beyond, "there's the Velasquez still. A Velasquez is always worth money. Belle will scold about parting with it, and aunt Leah will mourn; but we can't live on air and dew, like the fairies. I'll take it down to Mr. Bruner, the artist, this afternoon, and ask him to get us a purchaser. Poor people, such as we are, can't afford to retain old family relics."

And so, when aunt Leah was indulging in her afternoon nap, and Belle, the beauty of the family, was ironing out the flounces of her white muslin dress for the morrow's picnic, valiant Saidee climbed on a chair, took the unframed picture down (it was the head of some old Spanish grandee, with a stiff-pointed ruff, and an evil leer in the eyes), wrapped it up, and crept across the meadows with it to the village.

Mr. Bruner was in his studio—a grizzle-headed, blunt old gentleman, in a belted linen blouse and a faded velvet cap.

He nodded kindly at Saidee, who had once taken a few lessons from him, but when she displayed the canvas he shook his head.

"How much do you think it is worth?" asked Saidee wistfully.

"Nothing!" said Mr. Bruner.

"But," cried the girl, "it is Velasquez!"

"That a Velasquez?" said Mr. Bruner contemptuously. "My dear, there isn't a picture dealer in the country who would give five dollars for it. It's an imitation, and a wretched one at that."

So Saidee tied up the poor picture, and went home again, shedding a few tears as she walked under the whispering trees.

"My last hope gone!" she thought. "But I'll not tell aunt Leah or Belle that it is an imposture. They have always taken such innocent pride in the Velasquez."

As she came past the old brick house at the foot of the Locust Lane, a load of furniture was being carried in, for it was the second week in May.

Wicker chairs, twined with blue ribbon, a cottage piano, cases of books, engravings, bird-cages, plants—all sorts of pretty things.

Saidee paused and looked at them, not without interest.

"I wonder who our new neighbors are to be?" she thought.

Just then out trotted a stout, cherry-cheeked old lady, with her cap all on one side, and a worsted shawl tied over her shoulders.

"Oh!" said she, "are you the young woman who disappointed us yesterday about cleaning?"

"No," said Sadie, crimsoning to her temples.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" said the old lady; "what is to become us? All the furniture coming in, and my daughter lame from falling off a step-ladder, and the girl gone, and—— But," with an eager look, "perhaps you can recommend some one to help us settle?"

"I am sorry to say that I cannot," answered Saidee.

And she vanished behind the lilac-hedge, rather amused at the mistake which the old lady made.

Belle was full of news that evening.

"Oh, Saidee," she cried, "such a nice family is moving into the Locust House!"

"Yes," said Saidee; "I saw the furniture carts at the door as I came back from the village this afternoon."

"Oh, the village!" cried Belle, tossing her blonde head. "It's strange, Saidee, how much time you get to run about and enjoy yourself, while I am drudging at home. But there's a young gentleman there—the handsomest man, Alice Aikin says, that she ever saw—and Mr. Pyle knows him, and he is to be at the picnic to-morrow, to get acquainted with the young people of the neighborhood. Won't it be delightful?"

"Very," said Saidee indifferently.

But while Belle was talking she had made up her mind what to do on the day of the May picnic.

Early in the morning, while the flush of sunrise was still crimsoning the sky, and blonde Belle lay asleep with her yellow hair in crimping-pins, Saidee arose, dressed herself quietly, and slipped out of the back door like a little grey shadow.

At eight o'clock, aunt Leah rapped with her cane on the ceiling of her room, which was directly beneath the one occupied by her nieces.

Belle made her appearance presently, in a faded calico wrapper, rubbing her eyes after a drowsy fashion.

"Where's breakfast?" said aunt Leah.

"Where's Saidee?" counter questioned Belle. "Oh, I know the selfish thing! She has got up early and gone down into the woods to get some pink azaleas for her hair before the other girls think of it. She wants to astonish us all at the picnic. But I think she might have told me."

"I'm afraid Saidee thinks more of herself than she does of us," said aunt Leah sourly.

And Belle, in a very ill-humor, began to prepare the breakfast—a task generally assumed by her eldest sister.

While Saidee hurrying down the path by the swamp, took the short-cut across the clover-meadow, and was presently knocking at the door of the brick house where the load of furniture had stood the day before.

The old lady with the crooked cap and cherry cheeks came to the door.

"Have you yet engaged any one to help you get settled?" said Saidee, blushing very prettily.

"We can't hear of a soul!" said the old lady. "Every one is engaged just now, and——"

"If you thought I could be of use," faintly began Saidee.

"Bless me, child!" said the old lady, "you are too slight and small. Besides," looking closer at her, "you are a lady."

"But I know how to clean house for all that," said Saidee valiantly. "I've done it every year at home. We are ladies, but we are not people of means. And I think you will be suited with my work. It is necessary that I should earn a little money, and ——"

"Come in, my dear!" said the old lady—"come in and have a cup of coffee with us. I am Mrs. Hartwick—and this is my daughter Kate."

"Saidee Lynn!" exclaimed the soft voice of a pretty young girl, lying with a sprained ankle on the sofa.

To her amazement, our heroine recognised one of her schoolmates, Catherine Hartwick, who had been in the same class with her, at boarding-school, two years ago.

"But you surely never have come here to—work?" said Kate in amazement.

"Yes, I have!" said brave Saidee. "Why, is it any less creditable to clean paint and wash windows than to play croquet or do Kensington stitches? And my aunt Leah has lost all her little property, and we are very, very poor! So now you know all about it. And when I have eaten my breakfast, if Mrs. Hartwick will give me a cleaning cloth and plenty of soft soap, I'll show her what I can do!"

So that Miss Lynn was mounted on a step-ladder, polishing off an antique mirror, when Kate's soft voice was heard saying—

"Oh, Harry! is that you? We supposed, of course, you were at the picnic. Miss Lynn, this is my brother Harry. Harry, let me present you to Saidee Lynn, my dear old schoolmate, who has come here to help us clean house."

Miss Lynn made as graceful a bow as she could under the circumstances.

Mr. Harry Hartwick inclined his head.

"At the picnic, indeed!" he retorted merrily. "Not at all. I've been hunting high and low for some one to help you, and for lack of any success I have returned to do a little whitewashing myself."

"Oh, have you?" said Saidee. "I know such a nice recipe for kalsomine—as white as alabaster, and it won't rub off at all."

"Let's make it," said Mr. Hartwick promptly.

No picnic could ever have been more delightful than this day among dust, whitewash, scouring-sand and brooms.

Kate, on her sofa, hemmed curtains; Mr. Hartwick bustled to and fro; Saidee with her curly hair tied up in a handkerchief, scoured paints, and Harry whitened ceilings; and at twilight they had three rooms in perfect order.

"We have achieved wonders," said Kate, looking around at the neatly tacked carpets—the soft, garnet plush hangings—the pictures on the walls—the crystal brightness of the windows—while Mrs. Hartwick took Saidee mysteriously on one side.

"My dear," said she, "I do not know how to thank you sufficiently. But I am almost ashamed to offer you——"

"But I shall not be ashamed to take it," said Saidee, smiling. "Why should I? That is, if you really think I have earned it."

"My dear, you have more than earned it," said the old lady; "and if you could possibly come to-morrow——"

"Of course I will come," said Saidee.

Weary as she was, Saidee went around by the village, to buy some Young Hyson tea for the old lady before she returned to the Gothic cottage.

"Well," she cried brightly, to her sister, "what sort of a day did you have at the picnic?"

"Awfully stupid!" yawned Belle. "And the handsome young gentleman from Locust Lane didn't come at all."

"Didn't he?" said Saidee.

"And where have you been?" demanded Belle, in an injured tone.

"Oh, spending the day with a neighbor," said Saidee, with a laugh.

They finished the house-cleaning that week.

Mr. Harry Hartwick found it necessary, we may add, to walk home with Saidee the next evening, and he developed a remarkable talent in the amateur-painting and kalsomining line before they got through.

"Isn't she pretty, Harry?" said Kate, when at last they were settled comfortably, and Saidee had gone home for good.

"She is pretty," said Harry enthusiastically; "and she is brave, and she isn't afraid of honest work; and altogether she is my *beau ideal* of a girl."

"Mamma," whispered Kate, laughing, after her brother had gone out, "I believe our Harry is in love with Saidee Lynn."

"I'm sure I don't blame him," said Mrs. Hartwick. "She is a little jewel."

Aunt Leah never knew where the Young Hyson tea came from nor the sponge cake, nor the white grapes, nor all the little luxuries which had cheered her of late; nor did she suspect anything until one day Harry Hartwick came to her, and formally asked her for her neice's hand in marriage.

"Well, I never!" said aunt Leah.

"But how did you ever become so well-acquainted with him, Saidee?" questioned Belle, half pleased, half jealous.

"Because I cleaned house for his mother," said Saidee, laughing.

And then under solemn seal of secrecy, she told Belle all; and Belle declared that it was too romantic for anything, never pausing to think that real life is as full of romance as a summer meadow with buttercups, and that fortune comes to those only who go bravely out to seek fortune.

OLD-TIME QUAKERS.—The Quakers who so roused the wrath of Boston in the seventeenth century were not at all like the quiet and respectable Quakers whom one meets to-day in Rhode Island or in Pennsylvania. Many of them were very turbulent and ill-mannered, to say the least. They were in the habit of denouncing all earthly magistrates and princes, and would hoot at the governor as he passed along through the street.

They would allude to the Bible as the "Word of the Devil," and would rush into church on Sundays and interrupt the sermon with untimely and unseemly remarks. A certain Thomas Newhouse once came into one of the meetinghouses in Boston with a glass bottle in each hand, and, holding them up before the congregation, knocked them together and smashed them, with the discourteous remark, "Thus will the Lord break you all in pieces!". At another time a woman named Brewster came to church with her face smeared with lampblack. And Hutchinson and Cotton Mather relate several instances of Quaker women running about the streets and coming into town meeting in the primitive costume of Eve before the fall. Such proceedings were called "testifying before the Lord;" but one can well imagine how they must have been regarded by our grave and dignified ancestors, who could not have forgotten, moreover, the odious scene enacted at Minster by the German Anabaptists of the preceding century.

It is not strange that the Puritans of Boston should have made up their minds that such things should not be permitted in the new community which they had endured so much to establish. Several of the Quakers were publicly whipped, or stood in the pillory. They were forbidden to enter the colony under penalty of death; and at last three of their number, who had twice been dismissed from the colony with words of warning, and had twice been "moved by the spirit" to return and "testify" were hanged on Boston Common.

A FISH STORY.—In his book on Japan, just published in London an author mentions a curious dainty of the table which has escaped the notice of most travelers, namely a dish of fish so delicately carved that no vital part is touched, and the fish is still alive, glaring on its devourer, when the last slice of its flesh has been consumed.

Bric-a-Brac.

GOOD NIGHT.—In Switzerland's lofty mountains, the Alpine horn, which sounds also the farfamed Ranz des Vaches, when the sun has set, is taken by the herdsman and through it he pronounces the words "Praise the Lord God." At the sound all the herdsmen issue from their huts and take up the cry. At the last darkness falls and the highest herdsman calls "Good night," and "Good night" again resounds from all the mountains and rocky cliffs.

COLD AND SNOW.—The popular idea that "it is too cold to snow" is based on the fact that snow rarely falls during extremely cold weather, or until the prevailing cold has moderated somewhat; but, as the thermometer shows, we have snow-falls at all temperatures; the colder it is the finer the particles of snow. If the upper air contains more moisture than it can hold, the moisture will descend, no matter how cold the air below may be, as may be concluded from the fact that snowfalls occur in the Arctic regions when the thermometer marks thirty to forty degrees below zero.

THE DEWS OF EGYPT.—An old traveler refering to some Biblical point says: "The dews seem to be the richest present the atmosphere seems to give to the earth. When putrified in a vessel, it has a black sediment, like mud, which probably occasions the dark color of the upper part of the ground. The sulphur which is found in the dew, may be the chief ingredient of the cement of the earth; sulphur being very glutinous, as nitre is dissolvent. Dew has both these properties. So great is the change produced upon vegetation by the descent of the dew, that everything which appeared dead and dying, immediately became lively and delightful."

FORGING A HAIR.—A scientific paper reports a curious effect produced on a wrought iron forging by a human hair. The forging was in a cold press, that is a powerful press for finishing the forging after it is shaped. During this process it is put between two hardened hardened steel dies subjected to a pressure of 200 tons to the square inch. At one of these operations a hair taken from the head of a bystander was placed on the face of the forging and the full pressure applied. The result was that the hair was driven into the forging and imbedded in it. The hair itself was uninjured during the operation and was removed intact.

POINTED SHOES.—A great beau of the time of William Rufus, called Robert the Horned, wore shoes with long sharp points, stuffed with tow, and twisted in a spiral form. This fashion took the fancy of the people of that day immensely, and the points went on increasing yearly until the reign of Richard II., when they had to be tied to the knees of the wearer, to save him from being encumbered in walking. This tying, or fastening, in the case of gentlemen, was by chains of silver or silver gilt. In Chaucer's time the upper part of these shoes were cut to imitate a church window. The rank of the wearer in those days was known by the length of his poulaines. "The men," says Paradin, "wore them with a point before, half a foot long; the richer and more eminent persons wore them to a foot, and princes two feet long." By an act of the reign of Edward IV., the absurd lengths to which these points had attained was limited; and no one under the rank of a lord was to wear shoes more than ten inches long, and all cobblers making them were to be fined, and cursed by the clergy.

THE PLEASURES OF FREEZING.—The pleasures of freezing are set forth by a Canadian physician, who lately enjoyed them. His tongue and then his arms became stiff, sharp chills run down his back, and finally it seemed as though his whole body had been congealed, causing an almost entire cessation of the heart's action. This condition of suffering speedily gave place to a graceful warmth, which seemed to suffuse the system and cause an exhilarating glow. He was driving, and by this time had reached a house, but he went on, thinking that nothing now was to be feared. The sleigh appeared to glide through the air with great swiftness, and the horses flew like birds. A sense of exhultation filled him, and he urged the beasts to greater speed. The woods on each side of the road were passed so quickly that they became indistinguishable black lines. Then the jingle of the bells sounded further and further away until they passed out of hearing in the distance. He fell gradually into a delicious slumber, which came near being the sleep of death.

SCIENCE METHODS.—In 1692 Edmund Halley, the celebrated astronomer, was consulted by a friend as to the acreage of England and Wales. His process was very original. He took the best map of England which he could get, cut out the part which represented the land, weighed it, and compared the weight with that of an inch taken from the middle of the map, the centre of which was a point equidistant from King's Lynn and the mouth of the Severn. He found that the land, with the islands of Wight, Anglesey and Man, was four times the weight of his circle. His calculation gave him 38,600,000 acres. He then in the same manner cut out and weighed the several counties. He found, after carefully drying the pieces—the humidity of the air was the great difficulty in his calculation—that 40,000 acres weighed a grain. The above note is a singular illustration of the manner in which, before a proper survey, an able mathematician tried to solve a difficult problem. The actual acreage is, excluding the Isle of Man, 37,319,221; and Halley pleads that he should be licensed to the extent of a million of acres or so, especially as he had to include rivers and roads.

THE SORROW OF THE SEA.

BY I. D. K.

A day of fading light upon the sea;
Of sea-birds winging to their rocky caves;
And ever with its monotone to me,
The sorrow of the waves.

They leap and lash among the rocks and sands,
White-lipp'd, as with a guilty secret toss'd,
For ever feeling with their foamy hands
For something they have lost.

Far out, and swaying in a sweet unrest,
A boat or two against the light is seen,
Dipping their sides within the liquid breast
Of waters dark and green.

And further still, where sea and sky have kiss'd,
There falls, as if from heaven's own threshold, light
Upon faint hills that, half-enwathed in mist,
Wait for the coming night.

But still, though all this life and motion meet,
My thoughts are wingless and lie dead in me,
Or dimly stir to answer at my feet
The sorrow of the sea.

TIFF.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A GREAT MISTAKE," "ROSE OF THE WORLD," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.—[CONTINUED.]

I CAME to ask about Tiffany," said Ninon abruptly, flinging off her hat, and sitting down, tired and warm from her rapid walk.

"What about Tiffany?" demanded Mrs. Masserene coolly, as she drank her tea from her saucer, elbows on table.

"I had a note from her last night," the girl went on. "She told me you were going to take her away."

"Well"—Mrs. Masserene set the saucer down with ominous firmness—"I suppose I can do what I like with my own child?"

"What have you done with her?" asked Ninon, beginning to tremble. "Where is she?"

"That's my business"—curtly.

With a feeling of despair at her heart Ninon looked at the hard face opposite to her.

"It is my business too," she said, trying to speak gently; "she is my sister."

"Much you thought of that," sneered the widow, "seeing that you've never once had her to the Priory with your fine relations!"

"That was not my fault," urged Ninon, wincing. "Tiffany did not wish to go, and Madame Du Mottay has her own ideas. I could not very well dictate to her as to her choice of guests."

"Couldn't you, though?"—with another vulgar sneer. "You managed to make yourself very happy without Tiffany, anyhow, Miss Ninon; and I don't see why you should make a fuss now because she is not here at your beck and call whenever you choose to come."

"I know I have no right to say a word," admitted Ninon miserably; "but at least you will tell me where she is? Why should not you?"

"Because it doesn't suit me to tell you. Perhaps I've sent her to service, as I've threatened to do often enough. It is about all she's fit for, it seems to me."

Ninon started as if she had been stung.

"You have not done that," she asserted steadily. "You know very well that, if you have, I will go and offer myself as a housemaid at every house in Marybridge."

"I have no objection," declared Mrs. Masserene calmly. "I've had to work hard enough all these years to keep you like a lady. I don't see why you should not begin now to keep yourself. Not that anybody in Marybridge would have you at a gift. You're too well known in these parts."

At the tone of this speech the girl colored crimson.

"I am used to being insulted by you," she said, in a trembling voice; "but it was not of myself I came to speak, but of Tiffany."

She paused, helplessly wringing and twisting her hands. The old threat, it seemed, had lost its power. She was free to be a servant, to do what she would hereafter; Mrs. Masserene was no longer to be moved by such means. What was to become of her and Tiffany?

"What is it you want of me then?" she broke out miserably. "You must have some reason surely for acting so cruelly? Why don't you tell me at once?"

"Now you talk sense!" responded Mrs. Masserene, with a sound of satisfaction. "Of course I have a reason; and it won't take long to tell. You want to know where Tiffany is?"

"Yes."

"And to have her back again?"

"Yes."

"Well, it all depends on yourself."

"Upon me!" Ninon cried. "But I tell you that I am ready to do anything. What is it you want? To go to the ball? I will go back at once to Florry; I will beg her to send you a card. I did ask her, but——"

"Bother the ball!" said Mrs. Masserene viciously. "Do you suppose I care about their trumpery ball? I told you, if I didn't go, no more should you; and I think you'll find that will come true. But just at present I have other fish to fry. Listen to me, Ninon." She leant forward on her folded arms and looked the girl in the face. "I have put up long enough with your airs and graces, and I have made up my mind that you shall be married, whether you like it or not."

"Married!"—Ninon turned pale. "What do you mean?"

"It seems to me that my meaning is plain enough. What do you suppose I have brought you up like a lady for all these years, and given you the education you've had, if I did not count on you to make a good match, and give me some return for my money? You've had chances enough, Heaven knows! I've even given you another since the people at the Priory came home. You can't deny that. And what have you done with it? Why, all the village is ringing with your name and Quentin Beaufoy's—a fellow that hasn't a penny to bless himself with!"

Ninon drew up her throat.

"Oh, it's no use your putting on your fine airs!" declared her step-mother, unmoved. "The time is gone by for all that sort of thing. I've had enough of romancing and flirting and wasting of time, and I'm determined to come to business."

Ninon looked at her with beautiful haggard eyes.

"What do you want of me?" she asked again helplessly. "And what has all this to do with Tiffany?"

"Everything to do with Tiffany. Tiff isn't gone to service yet, so you needn't be alarmed. She's with some of my own people, and she's right enough, though, I promise you, she won't find much time for playing the piano."

"She is with friends?" cried Ninon, with feverish eagerness.

"She's right enough, I tell you; and she will come back here on the day you are engaged to be married, and no sooner."

The light died out of Ninon's eager face. Again the sense of her helplessness, of her utter loneliness, came over her.

"To make a long story short," proceeded Mrs. Masserene, pushing back her chair, and standing up, "Mr. Melladew has come to the point at last; you can be Mrs. Melladew and drive your own carriage, and give me and Tiffany a home for life. Now you know why I sent Tiff away, and what you've got to do to get her back."

Ninon too had started up, white as a sheet.

"Impossible!" she cried hoarsely.

Mrs. Masserene's hard face turned red with anger.

"Now take care!" she said. "You know I'm a woman of my word. You'll marry Mr. Melladew, or out of this house you'll pack, as well as Tiffany—I don't care where. You've had your way up to now, and now I'm determined to have mine. And you may consider yourself lucky to get such a chance after the way you've been behaving. What are you waiting for? For one of your fine gentlemen to come forward? You'll wait long enough, it seems to me. They don't seem to be in any hurry to propose, though they may be willing enough to flirt and carry on."

Ninon did not answer. She hardly heard this fierce and voluble tirade. She was trying hurriedly to realise the position in which she suddenly found herself.

To get Tiffany back, that was her most urgent desire; and to do that she must promise to marry Mr. Melladew—she, who was already engaged, and who had resolved only last night that she would die rather than be false to Dick Strong, the man whom she had already so bitterly wronged.

But how to keep that resolution and at the same time rescue Tiff from her loneliness?

To tell Mrs. Masserene of her engagement with poor struggling Dick would be to ruin all. For an instant the thought flashed across the girl's bewildered brain that here was a means of release of which she had not dreamed. Who could blame her if, under such a stress of doubt and misery, she confessed the truth?—which would not be her own doing, but the work of her step-mother, since it was certain that as long as she remained in Mrs. Masserene's house she owed her obedience. For an instant only. The girl put the temptation quickly aside.

It was a temptation to her in her then frame of mind. It seemed to her that it would be easier to marry the amorous brewer, for whom she need never profess any liking, who would take her, scornful and cold, with his eyes open and well knowing that she was being sold to him for his houses and carriages, than to become Dick's wife, with such a shuddering dread of his return, of their meeting, in her heart.

And to marry Mr. Melladew meant that Tiffany would be given back to her, never to leave her any more. She would have means to educate, to cherish, to protect her little sister ever afterwards, and all this weary, never-ending, perpetually recommencing struggle would be at an end.

But it was useless to think of it at all. There was Dick to be considered first.

Mrs. Masserene was watching the girl as she stood, pale and motionless, before her, Ninon's great haggard eyes staring straight and unseeing at the opposite wall, her delicate brows contracted in a painful frown.

"Well?" her step-mother said impatiently. "What have you got to say?"

"Let me think a little longer," Ninon answered, starting as she addressed her. "It is so sudden—I am not prepared——"

"There's nothing to think about," declared Mrs. Masserene roughly. "Mr. Melladew shall have his answer at once. I'll have no more shilly-shallying. It is easy to see that it is all up with your chances at the Priory."

Ninon started again, and her pallid face began to burn with a great and sudden blush. Her step-mother saw it, and eyed her curiously.

"Come—'Yes' or 'No?'" she urged in her hard voice. "But, if it is 'No,' out of this house you march. You can go back to your fine relations if they will have you. I don't care what you do. And, as to Tiffany, I don't suppose you'll give up any fad of yours for her sake, much as you talk about your love for her!"

Yes, Ninon thought rapidly, she could go back to the Priory, certainly. Florry would give her a home; or Mrs. Strong would take her in until Dick came back. But Tiff—Tiff, who even now perhaps was being ill-treated and looking to her to release her, to protect her! No—come what might, she must not forget Tiffany again.

And her power to help her henceforth depended on her marriage with Mr. Melladew! What was she to do? What could she do?

The great red blush that had sprung into her pale cheeks ebbed as suddenly away. She turned her eyes to her step-mother, with the piteous look of some dumb creature in pain.

"I cannot marry Mr. Melladew," she said blankly. "It is useless to ask me."

Mrs. Masserene turned livid with anger.

"I expected this, of course!" she said shrilly. "But you know what you've got to expect. Not only you, but Tiffany shall smart for it. I'll let you know who is mistress in this house, where, fine lady as you are, you are not too proud to live upon an honest woman that has worked hard for her bit of money!"

Ninon drew a long shuddering breath.

"I will live upon you no longer," she said wretchedly. "I will find something to do if you will give me a little time. But I can't go away from Tiffany. Let her come with me, and I will work for us both. I can teach, I suppose. Florry will help me to get a situation of some sort."

"You'll never set eyes on Tiffany again," declared Mrs. Masserene furiously, "until you promise to marry Mr. Melladew! I'll break your proud spirit for you! I'll teach you to treat folks that are as good as you as if they were the dirt under your feet! Come—be off with you! Your fine friends may do as they please. I wash my hands of you!"

She put her strong hand upon the girl's shoulder and thrust her from the room into the hall. Ninon staggered and fell against the balusters, with a low moan of terror and shame.

"Oh, don't," she said, "for my dead father's sake! Oh, don't send me away from Tiffany!"

Her delicate arm was bruised; the furious woman stood over her, threatening her again.

"Will you marry John Melladew?" she screamed, the blow falling on Ninon's shrinking head.

The girl put out her hands to keep her off. She could hardly stand.

"I cannot," she panted out breathlessly, "because I am already engaged! Oh, mother, what have you done? Oh, Heaven forgive you for this!"

"I'll do it again!" shrieked Mrs. Masserene, beside herself with rage. "You are engaged, are you? To your cousin Quentin, I suppose? I wish you joy of your lover. Go and starve with him as soon as you like. I've done with you!"

"No," the girl panted again. "You can tell me now where Tiffany is. You can give her back to me. I am engaged to Mr. Beaufoy!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHILE Ninon lay sleeping heavily in her little bed-room at Laurel Lodge, Mrs. Masserene thought it prudent to write a note to Madame Du Mottay, explaining the girl's absence as the effect of a sudden indisposition and assuring her that Ninon expected to be at the Priory again in time for dinner.

The poor girl's despairing lie had filled her step-mother with satisfaction and elation. In spite of her sneers at Ninon's fine relatives, she felt that it was one thing to be mother-in-law to John Melladew the ex-brewer and quite another to be mother-in-law to Mr. Beaufoy of the Priory.

In answer to her eager reproaches, Ninon had wearily declared that her reason for not having sooner confessed to her engagement was the fact that Mr. Beaufoy desired it to be kept secret for some months longer. His sister had had other views for him. He was anxious to avoid discussions and disagreements.

The girl could hardly stand or speak as her step-mother questioned her. The night before she had not slept at all. The excitement and shame of the scene of the morning had left her utterly worn out and exhausted.

Mrs. Masserene, secretly repenting her hasty conduct towards the future Mrs. Beaufoy of the Priory, had herself helped Ninon up-stairs and brought her tea, and left her to rest in the darkened room that Tiffany used to share with her.

"You must not mind my temper, you know," she said, with an apologetic smile. "If you had only mentioned your engagement sooner, I should have understood. But you never were one to bear malice, I must say that! And we'll soon have Tiff back. That'll brighten you up a bit. Now try to sleep if you can. Mr. Beaufoy will want to see you back, of course, this evening."

Ninon was too exhausted to be able to think when she was left alone. She had told a lie—in order to remain true to Dick and to get Tiffany back, it was true—but it was a lie. And she would have to confess what she had done to Brian Beaufoy, and ask him to help her in her trouble. That was what lay before her later, but just yet she need not think of what she should say or do; she was free to lay her aching head down, to close her heavy eyes, to forget everything except the one thought that Tiffany was coming back, and that she had kept her secret about Dick.

She slept until late in the afternoon.

Florry Du Mottay had driven in from the Priory in hot haste on receipt of Mrs. Masserene's carefully composed note.

It was not possible, she asked piteously, that Ninon was going to be ill before the ball? Her distress appeared to the obsequious widow so sincere that there could be little doubt she would easily be won over to Ninon's side when once the engagement was announced.

Madame Du Mottay was so anxious to see the girl, to make sure that they could depend upon her for that evening, that she would have gone up stairs and awoke her to ask her how she felt if Mrs. Masserene had not interfered.

So the little lady, ruffled, was obliged to content herself with a promise to send the carriage, and an assurance that Ninon should not be expected to dance, or sing, or in any way exert herself—only she must positively come back to the Priory.

This was what Ninon heard when, at last, she opened her eyes and lifted her still heavy and aching head from the pillow.

"Yes, I will go," she said drearily. "I will get up now."

Mrs. Masserene would have helped her to dress; but the girl shrank from her with a repulsion she could hardly conceal. The recollection of the degrading scene of the morning had come back upon her with crushing force as she awoke out of her merciful sleep, and with it the recollection of her own desperate falsehood.

What if Brian met her with the contempt she so entirely merited?

What if he would not consent to be her accomplice in the mad deception she had planned?

Would not all that horrible struggle have to be gone through again?

The girl sat in absolute silence, after she had crawled down stairs, while she awaited the arrival of the carriage. Mrs. Masserene's eager talk fell on deaf ears. One thing only she comprehended, that, as she was engaged to Mr. Beaufoy, her step-mother would look upon the invitation to the ball as settled.

There could no longer be any difficulty about that; and Mrs. Masserene would pledge herself to say nothing for the present about the engagement.

"I understand," Ninon said dully.

Florry Du Mottay was full of delight, compassion, wonderment, when the girl, white and trembling like a leaf, came into her boudoir.

What could have induced her to go out so early? Why had not she ordered the pony-carriage? She must have some strong tea at once, and let herself be dressed. Did she know that she looked even prettier than ever with those blue shadows under the eyes?

Ninon submitted herself quietly to the hands of the Frenchwoman. Of course she must go down to dinner. She had not a moment to lose in speaking to Brian. It did not matter that her heart stood still at the bare thought of the interview. It had to be gone through; she must contrive to see him alone for a few minutes in the course of the evening.

And she had Quentin to face too! Was he still angry, sore, revengeful, as she had left him last night?

"You pretty tragic Ninon!" said Florry, kissing her as they prepared to go down-stairs together. "One would think, to look at you, that you had the affairs of the nations on those white shoulders!"

"And it is only the fate of an insignificant girl," answered Ninon, with her pretty melancholy smile—"a girl about whom I heard something to-day."

She paused, and then asked suddenly, with some vague hope perhaps of obtaining help from her light-hearted little cousin, "If you, Florry, were engaged to a poor man, and people wanted you to give him up, to jilt him, and marry a rich one, what would you do?

Florry made a demure little face.

"I should probably remember for once in a way that a young girl owes obedience to her family. I hate poor men!"

"No, but seriously!" urged Ninon miserably.

"Oh, if women were to think seriously of marriage, they would never marry at all!

"And, honestly, I don't believe that anything in the world is worth thinking seriously about. Life is good fun while one is young. And you and I are young; don't let us bother our heads about anything as long as we can help it!"

Ninon broke into a laugh.

"That is right!" cried Florry.

"Now you look more like yourself. And here is Quentin dying to ask you how you are, and to give you that chair near the window. He has been mooning about all day long in your absence, and has not known what to do with himself."

Quentin turned round at this appeal, and looked, as he felt, shocked at the change in Ninon's face.

"You have been ill?" he asked, in a low voice, as Florry floated away and left them together. "Good Heaven, Ninon, what has happened?"

Her lips began to tremble.

"You see," she said, "I am fit to live only in the sun. Angry looks wither me up, and you are very angry with me."

She lifted her beautiful unhappy eyes to the young man's face.

"Am I?" he said, drawing a long breath. "I think I was last night. I did not know what it would be to spend such a day like this.

"Ninon"—he took her cold little hand in his and bent low over her drooping head—"we will forget it; we will remember only what went before and what is to come after.

"Nothing is changed; we are together still, and that is all I care about."

"Ah, Quentin," she said miserably, "you are asking me to go on doing you a wrong that I repent! Let us be friends and nothing more. You know—I have told you"—hesitating—"that I am not free, and——"

"Yes, I know," he answered, still in the same passionate whisper. "But since your—your engagement did not prevent you from talking to me, from dancing with me, from singing to me yesterday, why need it do so to day? I am warned; I expect nothing. I ask nothing but to spend the little time that remains to me here as happy as I have spent all the rest. Do you refuse me that?"

The girl hesitated, trembling, and trying to release her hand.

"No," he said; "I will not let you go until you have answered me. Say that all shall be as it has been, Ninon!"

Some one was coming across the room—Mr. Beaufoy. Ninon's heart stood still.

"Yes," she said abruptly, and then Quentin dropped her hand, and she sank into the chair by which she had been standing.

She had remembered again. She knew what had to be done before she slept that night; and she thought to herself that it was unfortunate that Mr. Beaufoy should have seen her standing hand in hand with his brother, when she was about to confess to him that she was engaged to another man, and to appeal to him to help her to be true to her word to Dick Strong.

It seemed as if she could never be five minutes in Quentin's society without getting into some foolish scrape or other. And all the evening he kept by her side, according to custom, adding to his usual confidential manner a little air of some mutual understanding between them that filled Ninon with dread.

Of course Brian would perceive it. His eyes were seldom far off, she saw, when Quentin and she were together.

And under his grave gaze of disapprobation Ninon found it hard to persevere in her good resolutions. She asked herself in bitter wonderment what power it was in this man which compelled her to show herself always to him in her worst light, to him whose good opinion seemed to her better worth having than that of any other man she knew.

Last night he seemed moved to pity for her for a few moments. He had spoken her name for the first time, and proclaimed their relationship aloud.

She thought if he would look at her again as he had looked at her then, that she could find courage to confess to her grievous faults, to ask him to pardon her falsehood, and to protect her a little against her stepmother's anger, until the time arrived for Dick to come home and take care of his future wife.

But now Mr. Beaufoy's cold face seemed to freeze every good impulse in her heart, and to urge her on, as was its wont, to new freaks, caprices, extravagances with Quentin. Though it was manifestly to her interest to soften, to interest him, though everything depended on his answer to her audacious confession—when she should find five minutes alone with him in which to make it—yet the girl could not refrain from doing and saying the very things that were most certain to annoy him.

The traces of her day of suffering had disappeared in the painful excitement she was enduring as the evening wore on and the time drew nearer and nearer for her to speak.

The pallor, the blue circles under her eyes, that had so aroused Quentin's pity, had given place to a brilliant flush that did not come and go, but burned with a feverish splendor, and lit up her splendid glances with an unnatural fire.

It was the fever of pain, of fear, of shame; but to Mr. Beaufoy it seemed that the blush had sprung up in response to Quentin's whispered words, which she was answering with reckless little speeches, at which the girl herself sometimes wondered in her secret heart, asking herself wretchedly what put such a thing in her mind, and what she would think of another girl who should venture to say them.

And ever present in her mind, even while she talked and laughed and coquetted, was the hideous scene of the morning. There was a dark bruise upon her delicate arm, half visible under the lace of her sleeve.

What would these people say among whom she sat if they knew of it and of her life—they who had nothing to hide, nothing to be ashamed of, who were really happy and prosperous, while she was only pretending to be so.

Ah, why need Brian Beaufoy look at her so contemptuously?

Had he never known what it was to suffer that he could not forgive an unhappy girl who was trying to forget her pain as best she could?

If he had had a little sister who had been sent away not for her own fault, but for his, to live with strangers and be badly treated—if he had ever been led, or had ever drifted, into a hundred foolish actions the bare thought of which made his ears burn—if he had such a home as she had—would he always be as calm, as cold, as maddeningly faultless as he now was?

Madame Du Mottay had proposed that they should play at Dumb Crambo, as the evening had turned out wet, and there was no possibility of sitting out on the terrace as usual.

Of course Ninon was chosen leader of the troupe, and of course Quentin was the first volunteer.

Great armfuls of finery, of drapery, of rugs, shawls, table-cloths, properties of all descriptions were carried into the music-room, where the actors were to dress.

Mr. Beaufoy had declined to take a part. He preferred to look on.

From Dumb Crambo they proceeded to extemporised tableaux.

There was one hastily arranged, in which Ninon and Quentin posed as Francesca da Rimini and her lover, reading together from the fatal book.

Florry was in ecstasies, and declared that she would have them photographed next day, that she would send to London, if a photographer could not be found in Marybridge equal to the occasion.

Fired by their success, Miss Masserene and Mr. Quentin Beaufoy next undertook to recite Alfred de Musset's *Nuit d'Octobre* in character.

A few yards of white muslin made a delicious muse of Ninon, who unbound her long hair and crowned it with green leaves. A velvet morning-coat and a haggard eye sufficiently represented the poet in Quentin's person, and the delicious French poetry was familiar to both of them. Every one went wild about the little performance.

It was a repitition of Ninon's old triumph in Dinard, when Dick had been present, and she had so completely fascinated little Sir Robert Davenant.

The thought of that old triumph came back to the girl now, as she came in front of the extemporized curtain, and stood smiling, and with shining eyes, to be complimented by Mr. Beaufoy's guests, and she turned somewhat abruptly away.

Quentin, still with dishevelled hair and open collar, was in the music-room, and helped her to unwind the white drapery which she had worn over her own white dinner-dress.

Neither of them spoke—Quentin because he was afraid that if he opened his lips, he should say too much.

The tableau, the touching of her hands, the listening to the music of the girl's voice, had thoroughly unnerved him. He was in desperate danger of forgetting that he promised her to ask nothing, to expect nothing.

"Oh, I am tired!" Ninon said, wearily putting her hands behind her head.

She was remembering that she had not yet spoken to Brian, that the evening was drawing to a close, that, though they kept late hours at the Priory, no opportunity seemed to be presenting itself for the interview she so much dreaded.

"Ah," she added suddenly, "my ring, my signs-of-the-Zodiac ring! I have dropped it. Quentin, pray help me to look for it!"

He saw it almost the moment he stooped, and took possession of it without saying a word, while Ninon continued to search. He hardly knew why he took it. He dreamed perhaps of some pretty scene of entreaty next day. He resolved that he would not give it up for nothing. What should he claim from her? Perhaps a drive to that little inn where they had once dined together at Dingley.

"How provoking!" cried Ninon, shaking out all the shawls and draperies that still lay about on the chairs and tables. "I suppose I have dropped it on the stage. I must go and see."

Quentin was on his knees, and began a little pantomime of knightly humility before his queen.

"If I find it," he said in a low voice, "I shall keep it and wear it as your badge."

"No," cried Ninon, greatly alarmed. "You will give it back to me at once. If any one should see it! If Mr. Beaufoy should notice it——"

"Brian," said Quentin, with a sneer.

"What if he did? You owe him no explanations. And as to the man who gave you the ring——"

"Hush—hush!" cried the girl, as Mr. Beaufoy, who was seeking his sister, drew aside the curtain and looked in.

Quentin was on his knees. Ninon was shaken, trembling, pale. Brian would have turned upon his heel but that she put out her hand and hastily spoke his name.

"Florry will be here in a moment," she said. "Do you mind waiting? I—I have something to say—to ask you."

She did not heed Quentin's look of amazement or Brian's cold reluctance. "We have done acting for to-night," she said, with curious suppressed irritation, turning to the kneeling man in the velvet coat. She felt that she could hardly endure the pain and the suspense much longer. "Do get up! Go into the drawing-room, and be complimented."

Quentin went without a word, but, as he passed her, Mr. Beaufoy heard a quick word or two about a ring.

"You wanted to speak to me?" he said, turning his reluctant eyes upon the girl's white form. "I am sorry I interrupted this last tableau."

Ninon's lips began to tremble.

"Why will you always misjudge me?" she said, with pathos. "I was not flirting with Quentin then. It is not as you think at all."

"I may do not think that I wish to interfere," retorted Brian distantly. "That is a subject that can concern only you and my brother, after all."

"Yes; I know that you despise me too much to care," the girl answered wearily. "And I am going to say something that will make you think worse of me than ever—if that be possible. But—you called me 'Ninon' last night for the first time—and we are cousins after all, much as you disapprove of me.

"So I am going to ask a favor of you—the greatest favor I ever asked of any one in all my life."

She paused, trembling more and more.

"It is my turn now, I suppose," thought Brian sardonically.

"What is this great favor?" he added aloud.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NINON made a sign to Mr. Beaufoy to let the curtain fall which he still held in his hand.

The heavy velvet curtain shut out the sounds in the next room, and left them shut in together in the disordered room, where the scattered properties still lay about the floor, and on the chairs and tables.

Brian advanced a few steps, feeling not a little curious, and offered his cousin a chair; but she put it aside with a nervous motion of the hand, and stood facing him, looking, in the vast old half-lit room, like some white and fabulous being out of story-land. Her great eyes were dilated, her lips apart, the black locks of Quentin's Muse still tumbling in splendid disarray about her slender form.

Brian waited some moments in silence, and then at last he said, with a half-smile, suspecting merely some new caprice on the part of this beautiful cousin of whom he so strongly disapproved—

"Is it so very hard to begin?"

The girl clasped her hands suddenly. He could see that her lips were very dry and parched.

"Very," she answered, almost inaudibly.

In spite of himself, the young man was touched, as he had been touched the night before by her sudden confusion under Quentin's allusion to the ghost in the picture-gallery.

"I don't think you need be afraid of me" he said, not unkindly, and with the same half-smile on his clearly-cut and sarcastic lips.

"You will think me very rude perhaps if I suggest that I shall not be easily shocked by anything Miss Masserene can say."

Ninon never took her eyes from his pale face.

She was still clasping and unclasping her two cold hands and wondering how she should begin.

"I am horribly afraid," she then said abruptly.

"I know that you are used to hearing me say all sorts of unwomanly things, but not such things as I am trying to say to you now."

His face began to grow hard again.

"I am quite at a loss to understand you," he replied, folding his arms, and leaning his back against the lofty carved mantelpiece.

"I am trying to explain," she said, in a curious pleading tone.

"You are not in a hurry? You will give me time to think?"

He bowed gravely; and there was silence between them for a few minutes, during which Ninon still stood before him, her eyes fixed blankly on his face.

"I wish I need not speak to-night," she began then.

"But I must, though I know that what I am going to say to you will make a great gulf through my life.

"On this side of it I stand now with you.

"You do not like me, of course; I am a coquette and fast and extravagant in my dress.

"But still I am your cousin Ninon, your guest; you are nearly always polite to me. You have really no right to feel such a profound contempt for me as you do. That is on this side of the gulf.

"But on the other!

"Ah, when I have spoken, when I have confessed to you what I have done, you will have only too much right to despise me! Perhaps you will send me away. I don't know.

"I think I do not care very much, except for Tiffany's sake.

"I am tired of suffering and dreading. I think I shall be glad when it is over, even though I shall be on the other side of the gulf then, and you will be standing alone on this."

"Don't you think it will be as well to avoid unnecessary exaggeration?" said Brian stiffly.

He thought the girl's tone theatrical, and in bad taste.

Of course she had done nothing to demand such strong language.

She was his cousin, as she had said. It was impossible.

"I am not exaggerating," she returned quietly.

"I am afraid to begin, you see. But I won't keep you any longer."

She went on in a curiously expressionless voice.

"I went home to-day because Tiffany has been sent away; and I wanted to find out where she is.

"My step-mother would not tell me until I promised to marry Mr. Melladew. When I refused, she struck me. And then I said I could not marry Mr. Melladew because I was engaged to you."

Brian looked at her in incredulous amazement.

"Is this a jest?" he said curtly. "I fail to see the point of it myself, Miss Masserene."

"It is not a jest at all. It is the truth," the girl answered.

"I told her that."

"But——"

Mr. Beaufoy's amazement was almost too great for words.

"In Heaven's name why? What could you hope to gain by such a——"

"By such a lie," added Ninon in the same wooden voice.

"I will explain that. I am engaged to a poor man; and if I had told her so, she would have turned me out of the house, and I should never have seen little Tiffany again."

"You are engaged?"

Mr. Beaufoy said this quickly, abandoning his lounging attitude.

"Yes."

Brian drew a long breath, compressing his lips, and looking at the girl's fair unhappy face for some moments in silence.

"And the man," he said then, "to whom you are engaged is unable to help you in your difficulty?"

His tone was one of cold disdain. He thought that Quentin was her lover.

"He is away," Ninon answered briefly. "He will soon be home."

A curious thrill ran through Brian's veins.

She was engaged, and not to his brother! What did it all mean?

"I really do not understand," he said again.

"I have not the faintest notion what it is all about. I have never been fond of plots and mysteries. If you will speak plainly perhaps——"

"What more can I say?" answered Ninon drearily.

His manner was not encouraging.

After his first surprise, he had put aside the question of her pretended engagement to him, as if it were too preposterous to deserve comment.

"I don't suppose all the explanations in the world will make you pity me or help me until Dick comes home.

"I hardly thought you would even when I told the lie.

"But I did not know what else to do. I wanted to gain a little time—and it was for Tiffany."

Her lip was trembling.

She turned to go.

But Mr. Beaufoy caught her hand as she passed him, and stopped her.

"Sit down and try to talk reasonably to me," he said, with a somewhat forced composure.

"I wish to help you if possible. I do not yet know whether it will be possible or not."

The girl obeyed meekly.

What had become of all her queen-like airs, of her coquetry, of her laughing defiance of Mr. Beaufoy's wishes?

"It is such a long story," she said, with a piteous half-smile up into his cold face; "and my part in it is such an ugly one. I wish you would not ask me to tell it."

"Tell me as much or as little as you please," he replied, with some impatience, "so long as I can make out what you mean by the very startling confession you have just made.

"You don't seem to realise the difficult, the—the ridiculous position in which you have placed me."

"Yes, I do," she said wretchedly. "I told you that very likely you would send me away when you had heard what I had to tell you. But if you do, I don't know what will become of me—indeed I don't!"

"Well?" he urged.

No one was coming to disturb them. He remembered that it was the first time they had ever been alone together.

Ninon's slender white form seemed almost lost in the massive old chair in which she sat; she looked younger, frailer, more helpless than he had ever seen her look before.

For the first time he realised that she was more than a child, and that he had been expecting from her the discretion and sedateness of a woman.

Where was she to have acquired them? he asked himself now, with a little tardy remorse.

Was she to have made his sister Florry her model?

Ninon looked up again, and found his dark and keen eyes fixed on her with a somewhat relenting expression.

"You might pity me," she said, as if reading his thoughts.

"I have not had a kind mother to bring me up, like those English girls you admire and respect so much.

"Perhaps I should have been good too if I had grown up in such homes as they have had."

"I do not wish to be hard," her cousin said gravely; and then, in faltering words and with burning blushes, Ninon began the story of her life from the time she had met Richard Strong at the door of the old Abbey on the Mont Saint Michel.

She did not spare herself.

She told him how she had always had dreams of living in the great world, of being surrounded by luxury and admiration, and how the temptation of such an existence had had power more than once to make her resolutions waver—had induced her to leave her sister Tiffany, who depended on her for all her happiness, and whose whole career had been sacrificed to hers, in order that she, the "beauty" of the family, might have such an education as would enable her to go into the world and make a great match.

"I may well think a great deal of my face!" the girl said bitterly. "Ever since I was a baby I have been taught that it was the one good thing I possessed. And you see what it has cost me already!"

Brian bowed without speaking, and she went on with her story.

She told of Dick's struggles to escape her of her determination to retain him at her feet, of Mary Hawthorn's love for him, which had hardened when it should have softened her.

"It would have made them all so happy if he had married Mary," Ninon said, in the dull voice in which she had spoken all along.

"And I—I should have been happy too perhaps if only he had not had to give me up for her; I could not bear that. I knew how cruel I was, even while I was keeping him from her.

"Did you ever look on at your actions, as

if they were those of another person, Mr. Beaufoy, protesting against them in your heart, hating yourself for them, and yet feeling impelled by some horrible influence to persevere in wrong-doing? But"—with a bitter little laugh—"I need not ask you.

"You always do what is right. I don't believe you have ever been tempted even to do wrong."

"That is absurd," interrupted Mr. Beaufoy curtly.

"I am not aware that I set up for being any better than my neighbors. And, at any rate, it is not my life that is under discussion for the moment, but yours."

"Yes, I know; I am going on"—sighing. "There is not much more to tell. Dick would have gone away at last, I think, without saying a word. And I—if I had been wise, I should have let him go; but I could not.

"It was my luck, I suppose. He looked too sad, and I had spoiled his life—it was altogether too late for remorse, of course; but I always spoil things. And so I asked him to marry me, and we are engaged."

She paused; but Brian said nothing.

What indeed could he have said?

"It is such a foolish engagement," Ninon added.

"Dick is so poor, and I am so little fitted to make him a good wife, that we were obliged to keep it a secret. And, if I had told my step-mother yesterday, it would have been the same thing as giving him up. I was tempted for a minute to tell her. You know I am not very happy. I should be glad if I could be free without making Dick suffer. But I can't do that; and so I must keep my word, no matter what comes of it."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ALONG THE LINE.

BY GEORGE MANVILLE FENN.

AUTHOR OF "BENEATH THE SEA" "UNDER WILD SKIES" ETC, ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.—[CONTINUED.]

I HARDLY seemed to have been away on taking to my old duty again, it was so much like everything that passed on the last day I was there.

Ned came and asked for a shilling, and went away looking worse than ever, and my heart felt very sore about him.

Tod made his appearance next, and vapored about a good deal, ending by going away without saying a word.

At noon, as usual I heard wheels; and the old lady came in her carriage, to sit as stiff as ever, waiting to see the trains go by; and I went to the window and raised my cap to her out of compliment, and by way of thanks to her for the kind way in which she had treated me during my sickness; when, to my surprise, I saw that she was not alone, there being a young lady seated by her with her veil down.

I bowed twice, but the old lady took not the slightest notice of me; and when, soon after, I went and stood by the window, she seemed to grow more rigid than ever, and so I went back to my work very quiet and thoughtful somehow, but I did not know why.

The trains came by pretty quickly, one after the other, that day; and I couldn't help thinking how risky it was, but the thought passed away, and the carriage hurried off. Mrs. Bell came with a nice hot bit of dinner, and my appetite was excellent, until, happening to raise my eyes while I was eating, I saw Sarah Gee walking very slowly up and down on the other side of the way, and her aspect as she gazed at the signal-box was so plaintive, that my appetite was spoiled.

Sarah Gee came along the road again in the afternoon, when I was standing at my window, running down the officials' time table—the one, you know, that takes in all the trains that run—passengers, goods, and empties.

I was, I say running down the time bill, so as to be certain about two or three alterations that had been made, when I lifted my eyes, and there was Sarah Gee coming along.

As soon as she saw that I was looking at her, she gave herself a sort of twist, and undulated from her chignon down to her boots—making me feel as if I should like to box the stupid wench's ears.

She went in extensively for chignons, did Sarah; and her face shone with cleanliness. I couldn't but notice, too, how smartly the girl was got up; and was half laughing to myself, as she went by, to see how she minced, and put on little affectations, when she turned around, saw that I was looking after her, gave a quick glance up and down, and then kissed her hand, before hurrying off as hard as she could go.

"Hang it!" I exclaimed, not knowing whether to be savage or burst into laughing. "Why, the girl's fell in love with our nobleness!"

I went and jerked a couple of levers savagely, at the thoughts that came upon me; and then I sat down, to think it out.

I'd never hardly so much as looked at the girl. Well, perhaps, when she had come in to Mrs. Bell's I had joked at or with her; and this was evidently fostered by the old lady. But there, as to following it up—then, I got up angrily, and turned to my work.

Back came the thoughts again, and some thing seemed to say to me, why not? What was I but a single man? The girl was in my own class of life, and would no doubt make a very good wife, and mother of a dozen little rascals, who could be brought up to the immortal profession of their papa.

"Let me see," I said, laughing bitterly to myself; what are the young lady's advantages and accomplishments? She has her fortune of fifty pounds—wonderful! She is very straight, strapping, and healthy; she makes capital bread; has a charming giggle; says 'Oh, the very ideal!'; no doubt, can wash and clean; lastly, she is amiable in disposition, and admires the noble person of this celebrated signalman, 'Jack in the Box.'

I gave quite a savage laugh then, as I ran to the lever, and altered the signals for a train coming in; for I had heard the whistle in the distance.

"Poor wench!" I said bitterly; "it was none of my seeking.

The train had been gone about five minutes, when I heard steps, and looking out, there was Abel Crookes coming along the ballast, with his bell under his arm; and the next minute he had climbed up the ladder, settled himself down upon the platform, so that he could hold the bell with one leg, and give it a good polish up with his rotten stone and rag.

"There, you needn't look," he said; "I ain't going to break my rules by coming in. I'm on the company's business—keeping the bell bright. I say, it's like old times to see you here once again."

"Glad you think so."

"Yes, it's all right," he continued, polishing away at a little tarnished spot. "Tod's gone up to town, and the station's in charge of the head clerk, else I should not be here. I say, I don't think I shall stand this long.

"What?" I said.

"This eighteen shillings a-week business. It don't pay for one's arm, John Black, and the chance of accidents.

"Why, one might as well be a soldier."

"Well, it is dangerous," I said.

"Yes, 'tis," he continued; "and somehow of late, John Black, I've got into a way of thinking that afore long I shall have to be picked off the line, like that there poor chap who was cut up by the express.

"'Taint pleasant to think of, when you've got to eight and forty, and only one arm left."

"Pleasant—no!" I said.

"Let me see, it was Sammy Jackson as helped me to pick that chap up, and we did it in a couple of the missus's clothes baskets; and werry horrid it was, for he was cut up, you know, and over fifty yards o' the line. And 'Ah,' says Sammy to me, as he picked up the last as we'd be looking for, and laid it in the basket—t'other foot, you know being in the first basket—'Ah,' poor chap!' he says, 'he little thought o' this when he had braxfuss this morning. Ah, Bell, my lad who'd ever think as that 'ere was a stout, strong porter an hour ago?'"

"Don't you think we had better change the subject?" I said.

But Bell went on polishing away.

"'Ah!' he says to me 'who knows, Bell, which on us two'll be the next; whether I shall be a picking o' you up in a basket, or you'll be a picking up o' me?' Poor chap! it was his turn as come first, for I had to help pick him up, and carry him, without any help, poor fellow! into the lamp-room; and he looked up at me, and he says, pointing down at his lower parts, all bleeding horrid, 'Bell, old man, this is better than I 'spected; took 'em off, clean, didn't it? Being cut up is so horrid. Tell 'em to bury my legs with me old man!'"

"For heaven's sake, stop that horrid talk, Bell!" I exclaimed—"it's enough to drive a fellow mad."

"I'm down, John Black—I'm down," said Bell, wiping one of his eyes with the rotten stone rag, and making a brown patch there—"I'm down, John Black, low-spirited and queer.

"The work's bad enough, and the pay's bad enough, without one's having to be rowed, and reported and bullocked about by a chap like that there Tod.

"He's always at me—always; and sometime, though I don't show it, and laugh at home, and tease the missus, I've felt as if I should be glad to lay my head down on the metals and have it took off."

"Nonsense, man," I said; "there's better luck in store."

"Not for me, John Black—not for me. If it wasn't for the missus, I wouldn't care a pin. I'd take it, when it come, like a man. It's a blessing, though, as there ain't no young ones."

"Take what when it comes?" I said.

"My dose," he said grimly.

"Lor' bless you, John Black, it must come to it sooner or later. Sammy Jackson's turn came afore mine, and he died, though they amputated him, same as they did my arm, when I thought it was all over then. But it will come—it must come. Here I've helped pick up 'leven chaps as have worked with me as mates, or been drivers, or stokers, or something.

"Two on 'em was young clerks. What should happen as I shouldn't go same as they did?"

"Rubbish!" I said. "Why shouldn't you die at a good old age?"

"I sha'n't die of no old age," replied Bell, contemplating his oblate face in the polished metal before him. "My arm's been shooting awful lately, and it's coming soon."

"What is" I said, horrified.

"The end on it, mate. So I thought I'd have a word to you on the quiet: so as to make provisions like for the missus."

"My dear Bell, you are a little out of order," I said.

"No medicine won't do me no good," he said after a pause, during which I let a train that did not stop go by.

"I've seen something, John Black, as was a warning sent to me to put my house in order, as the parson says."

"I can't run away from you, Bell," I said, bitterly; "but I should esteem it a favor if you'd be off, and not come near me again till you're better."

"Yes, I knew you'd talk like that, John Black," he said, mournfully, as he softly rubbed his bell with his sleeve; "but I ain't no friends or relatives as I'd care to talk to as I would to you—not about money matters."

"To me, Bell?" I said. "I've been as great a scamp in money matters as ever lived."

"Don't care," he said, dolefully; "you can't help that now. What I wanted to say was this—if anything happens to me, there's only twenty-three pun four and sixpence halfpenny saved up, including interest; and I thought I'd ask you John Black, to stand by the old woman in keeping your lodging, and that friend of yours there, for it would keep home together for her as deserves it; for if ever there was a good wife, John Black, it's her—that it is."

"A better woman than your wife never lived," I said, warmly.

"Thank you, John Black, thank you," he said, putting down his piece of flannel—"would you mind shaking hands on that?"

"No," I said, shaking his hands heartily—"not if you go and act like a man and say no more nonsense."

"Ah!" he said, with a sigh, "you don't believe in fetches, I suppose?"

"No," I said, laughing, "I don't."

"Ah!" we believe in them in my part of the country, John Black. It's a pity as you don't, for you're a very sensible man on most points."

"Well, Bell," I said laughing, "it's a pity; but we all have our weaknesses."

"Ah, if you'd seen what I saw, you wouldn't talk like that, he said, sadly.

"And, pray, what did you see?"

The poor fellow shuddered, and he was silent for a few moments, during which he gave the bell another polish.

"I've seen it three times, John Black, he said at last—"three different nights in succession."

"Seen what?"

"My fetch," he said, solemnly.

"Well," I said, smiling, "and what was it like?"

"Like me," he said, shivering; standing, scared and frightened like, in the front of the down mail as it went by.

"It had its hands up, as I've seen chaps put up theirs—platelayers when they've been taken—and each time it gave a shriek as the train went."

"Well?"

"And then it was gone."

"Imagination, Bell," I said.

"No," he said, shaking his head, "it was all meant for me to see. First time it was so 'orrid real, that I ran down the line, 'specting to find some poor chap there, but there was none. Third time, like a flash, it came to me what it was, and why I had seen it."

"When was it—at night?"

"Yes—the mail," he said, turning up a white face to me as he stood his bell on the platform, and said—"You'll do that for me if anything happens, John!"

"Of course I would, if anything did happen, Bell," I said, taking his hand. "But don't you be foolish, old fellow. You go on with your work as usual, and take care of yourself, for your wife's sake, do you hear?"

"Yes," he said, sadly.

And he slowly went away, looking like a man thoroughly impressed with the truth of that which he had seen.

I thought a great deal about what poor old Bell had said; and on putting that and that together, it seemed to me that both he and the signalman who had done my duty had seen the same ghost.

As to what the ghost was that they had seen, on that point I had my own suspicions.

Mrs. Bell brought me my tea as usual, and gave a good report of Ned Hassall, who was reading in his room; and on my telling her that Bell seemed a little unwell, she said she noticed it, but that it was only some trifling ailment.

The night came on dark and stormy, with gust of wind and rain, the box quivering, and the windows rattling as the rain beat upon them.

It was bitter cold, too, and more than once I felt as nervous as if I had not ridden myself of the horror that had gotten into my system, for, as the evening wore on, I grew low and nervous.

One of the great semaphores creaked and groaned dismally, and more than once I wondered whether I was safe, for if that had blown down across the signal-box it would have gone like so much bandbox.

I laughed that off, telling myself that the place was strong enough; but I could not laugh off the impression that the wires were playing the most weird, strange airs, that vibrated through my box, until the air seemed filled with sounds that buzzed and boomed, till I was ready to thrust my fingers in my ears.

It was very dark outside, and the signal lights stood out like green or red eyes from a dead black wall; the lights of the trains flashed out against the darkness, looking quite clear and sharp, till a driving mist of rain came and obscured them.

I never remembered feeling the box so wretched before. The wind blew through the cracks, and moaned and sobbed at the windows; and a loose board rattled fiercely.

Of course, all that Bell had said to me about his fetch, and the ideas of the signalman about the place being haunted, came upon me, with imaginations enough of my own to drive me out of the box, if I hadn't been firm and determined, telling myself it was a disgrace to a man like me to have such ideas. So I nerved myself—I wanted it badly enough—and made up my mind to try a pipe; but only to give up directly, for I was suspicious.

Now, do you think I could help glancing nervously every now and then at the glass door, or the window at the side? I couldn't help it. I knew how childish I was, and that I was quite unstrung. I called up all my old philosophy, and the preachings that I had delivered to others, but it was of no avail; and every now and then I gave a shudder, and expected to see the ghastly face of some poor wretch who had died on the line staring in at me.

Once I was holding a lever, when I glanced up at the side of the box, and felt certain that there was some one looking in.

For a few moments I could not move. Then I walked steadily to it, and put my face against the glass, to find that I was looking out at the black darkness of the night; and I turned back, abusing myself for my cowardice.

The evening wore on, and my time was divided between busy work, watching, and those shadowy fears. At last, ten was approaching, when, after sending on the mail, the light engine and goods train, I should be relieved; and never before did I look forward with so much eagerness for my successor.

I stood gazing along the line, where the rails shone wet, with the signal lights glimmering along them, and at last came the welcome ting of the bell to announce the light engine.

I passed this on all right, and after a few shouts to an fro out of my window, which I gladly shut afterwards, to watch the swinging lantern signals, as another truck was put on ready for starting, I waited for the coming mail.

It was, if anything, darker than ever, and I was standing by the telegraph instruments, when, raising my eyes, there, at a short distance from the glass, and looking blurred and undefined, was a face, staring hard at me with its glassy eyes.

It was unmistakable—I could not be deceived; and, as soon as I could recover myself, I ran to the door, threw it savagely open, and looked out, telling myself it must be Ned.

But, no; there was the rain and darkness, but not a sign of a soul.

I listened, but I could not hear a step; and I felt certain that no one could have got down from my little iron-railed platform in so short a time.

It was very strange; and I was asking myself whether it was not imagination, and based upon what I had heard, when the sharp ting of the little telegraph bell brought me to myself, and a few minutes after there was the dull roar of the night mail coming with the wind.

I went to the levers then, leaving the door wide open, and took my place, putting on signals at "All right;" and then, with the points properly laid, I stood waiting for the train to thunder by.

From where I stood, with the door thrown back, I could see on to the down line, where there was just a faint glimmer of the iron rails; and as I stood, with the noise increasing, all at once it seemed to me that an iron rail, that I had, a few moments before, seen glisten, was obscured by something interposed, and the next moment, as the light of the engine threw a glare before them, I made out something misty, and nearly loosed my hold of the handle; but I kept on, the points were safe, and the great drops of perspiration stood upon my forehead—for there, growing plainer by the engine lights, till it stood out strange and weird-looking, was a figure, apparently right on the line, holding its hands up, as if to stay the engine that dashed along. A moment before, the figure was dimly seen; then it stood out bright and clear in the broad, yellow glare shed by the engine; and the next moment the train had thundered by, leaving me wet with perspiration, and trembling like a leaf, for I knew that some wretch had been run down.

I could not have saved him, only by shutting the mail on to a siding to slay its freight, or by turning it on to the up-line, where it would meet another train, unless some one were at the points by the distance signal to turn it back to its own pair of metals. All I could do was to hold on by my levers, and let the train pass. Then I signalled on, caught up a lantern, and ran down to see for the poor wretch's remains.

I held down my lantern as I reached the down line, and commenced searching here and there for traces of the poor wretch, but there were none.

Then the porter who had been shunting, and the guard of the goods, came up with their lanterns, and we searched in all directions, on the up and down lines, and between them; but there was not so much as a drop of blood, and I was obliged to own at last that I had been mistaken, and they both laughed at me as they went away.

I climbed back into my box, and sent the goods train back into the station, where Bell, who was in charge, sent it on, and Gummer coming up to relieve me, I went off shivering and nervous from weakness, thinking of the late signalman, and Bell's stories; but all the same, convinced in some way that it was Ned Hassall.

"And he'll come to his end through it, if I don't save him," I muttered as I went along, wishing heartily that he had never found me out.

"Poor fellow," I said, "I must save him if I can."

"Where's Mr. Hassall?" I said, as soon as I entered.

"In bed these two hours," was Mrs. Bell's reply.

I started then with vexation; for Sarah Gee was there, and she rose, giggling, saying that she must go now.

"She's been keeping me company, I was so lonely," said Mrs. Bell.

"But I must go now, Mrs. Bell—I must, really," said Sarah, giggling and undulating again. "I should have gone before, only really it was so dark and wet, I—that is, I— Oh, the idea! how stupid! What was I going to say?"

"Why, that you thought Mr. Black would see you home, when he came," said Mrs. Bell, bluntly.

"Oh, the very idea!" cried Sarah Gee. "I'm sure I never—never thought of such a thing."

Here she waved like a piece of grass in a ripple of water, and looked at me, and blushed.

"I'm sure he will see you home, as it's so dark. Won't you, Mr. Black?" said Mrs. Bell.

"Of course. With pleasure."

But I was glancing the while towards Ned's room, and longing to go there.

I had my wish, for Miss Gee declared suddenly that the very idea was dreadful; and, throwing a shawl over her head, she gave me a very coquettish look, and started off without me; when, to Mrs. Bell's disgust at my want of gallantry, I merely said—

"Well, just as she likes."

Next I went to see after Ned, to find him lying asleep, muttering gently; and there was not a sign of a wet garment lying about.

"I don't care," I said to myself; "it's his dodging, and I shall find him out."

Then I shuddered, for I could not help thinking of Bell's horrors; and it seemed to come home to me that the next poor wretch cut to pieces and then picked up would be poor Ned, whose life I had helped to wreck.

I had my supper, and then, on going to bed, Ned woke up, and sat staring at me in a very strange way.

"Been out to-night?" I asked him.

"No," he said—"no. I came to bed early."

And then he began to shiver, and looked about the room in a curious way, ending by getting up, half dressing himself, and catching my arm.

"Can't you turn it out John?" he said, pettishly.

"There's nothing here," I said.

"Yes—yes," he whispered, pointing to a corner of the room. "There, there."

"Nothing, my good fellow," I said; "it's fancy."

"It's no fancy: and you tell me this to keep me from being frightened at it. There it is—there it is, nearly always now. It used to go off by the mail at night, but now it comes back."

"What—here?" I said, to humor him.

"Yes," he cried, eagerly. "There—mock, and mow, and gibe as much as you like," he said, savagely, shaking his fist at the corner of the room, "but I'll tell him all the same. Look at the coward, John, how he sneaks beneath the bed, and pretends to be gone; and then, if I lie down, he comes up at the side, leans over me, sickening me with his hot breath, and driving me mad."

"Lie down, old fellow," I said, quietly.

"Lie down? What, for him to come and lean over me, and go on, drone, drone, drone, about my wasted life?—how I've ruined pocket, position, health, everything with brandy! Pah! his hot breath reeks of brandy. He swims in brandy, he washes in brandy, and he sits there splashing me with the cursed stuff."

"Have a glass now, Ned," I said.

"Yes, yes," he cried, eagerly—"get me some."

I got out the bottle and glass, and let him take them in the palsied hands he stretched out.

It was very still then, for Mr. and Mrs. Bell were in bed, and the neck of the bottle chattered against the edge of the glass as he filled it, letting some spill upon the carpet.

He raised the glass then to his lips, but at the smell of the hot spirit he turned away, shuddering.

"Pah! it reeks like his breath," he cried, passionately. "I hate it. Curse the stuff!—it's liquid madness, and I've drunk it until I've no blood left—no blood left. Do you hear, John?—no blood—my veins are full of brandy. You shall see some day how it flows."

He raised the brandy again to his lips, as I watched him, anxiously debating as to whether I should bring a doctor; but he lowered it again, and then, looking in the corner, he cried—

"There, blue brandy devil—take your cursed stuff, drink it, drown in it, damn yourself with it—I'll have no more!"

And before I could stay him, in an access of passion he hurled bottle and glass at his imaginary tormentor, the glass shivering against the wall, and the brandy splashing all over that part of the room.

"There, John, do you smell him?" he cried. "Look at his trail, how he has left it all over the wall. See how he sneaks under the bed again, to come out as soon as he thinks I am going to try and sleep."

He tried to moisten his smoked lips with his feverish tongue, and then threw his restless arms about, and resisted my efforts to get him to lie down.

"No, no," he whispered—"he'll only come and preach at me again. He wants to drive me to kill myself; but I've got a plan to end him, and I shall get rid of him some day. I'm not going to kill myself. What's the use, when there's no blood in your veins, only brandy? Pah! how the place smells of brandy. He turns my tea to brandy, the milk to brandy. I go to wash my face, and the water's brandy. Oh, it's horrid! horrid! horrid! Do you know why he tries all these plans?"

"To cure you, perhaps," I said.

"To cure me? No, not he. It's pretence. He abuses—lectures me. Calls me villian, idiot, worthless; and goes on poisoning me the while—to make me kill myself, I tell you. John," he said, in a horrified whisper that made my blood curdle—"he came one night and sneered and grinned, and told me I should be a suicide, and that there'd be a verdict of *felo de se* on me. John—oh! the coward, it was enough to drive a man mad, but I wouldn't give in; don't say anything, or he'll do it again—he showed me the horrible dripping stake that was thrust through me at the cross-roads, and it was all wet with brandy, smelt of brandy. Pah! it was horrible!"

"There, there, old fellow—get to bed," I said. "Won't you have a little brandy if I fetch some more?"

"No, no; it's poison, it's death, John, death. Pah! the place reeks of it! There, there he is again. Curse him! Turn him out, John," he whispered, hoarsely. "Look at the grinning, sneering devil, he's glad now that he has done his work; but I'll disappoint him yet. Here, John, listen," and he placed his lips close to my ear—"he thinks I shall kill myself, and I've laid a trap, and shall kill him."

"Have you been trying to kill him down by the line?" I said.

He looked at me curiously.

"No—oh, no—nothing of the kind, but hush! don't let him overhear you. There," he cried, pointing once more in the corner, "look at him listening. He thinks he knows my plans; but a man's more than a match for such a thing as that!"

He folded his arms and stood looking, with an air of profound contempt, at the spot where the brandy was splashed against the wall; and then I got him back to his bed, on which he lay half-dressed, while I made up my mind to sit and watch by him; for he was in a high state of delirium, and I meant to determine by the way matters turned during the next half-hour how I should act. If he went to sleep, I should put off getting the doctor until morning: if he remained excited, I meant to call up Bell, and send him for medical assistance.

It was a dreary watch, and, think as one would, fortify oneself as one could, it was impossible to sit there, in that dimly lighted room, without a shudder; as, set aside that which he had said, the poor fellow kept on softly groping after my hand, to draw attention to various objects in the room, at which he would point; and then, when I told him that there was nothing present, he would raise himself a little more.

"There," he would whisper, "there! Look, man, crawling along like a serpent close to the wainscot, don't you see? Look at the slimy, loathsome reptile. Ugh! but I'll make an end of him soon."

I got him calmed down, and once or twice, by way of experiment, I proposed brandy; but he turned from me shuddering. And I could not help feeling hopeful, and thinking that if the doctor could now get rid of his delirium, and strengthen him, my plan had been successful, if the old thirst did not return.

"It has been a horribly risky thing, though," I said to myself.

Then I shuddered again as I lay back in my chair, watching the poor fellow's terribly changed face, the nervous twitching of his hands, and the way in which, from time to time, he would start up, and glare menacingly at the one corner of the room.

It was a good time for reviewing the past, and it kept away all disposition for slumber till day began to break, when, finding that Ned was sleeping heavily, I went and called Bell to come and take my place, gladly seizing the opportunity to go and lie down, so as to be ready for the coming day's work, but little thinking what it was to bring forth.

CHAPTER XIV.

NED'S MANIA.

I GOT a doctor to Ned, and he pronounced it—what of course I knew it to be—*delirium tremens*, and a bad case; declaring that it was necessary for a nurse to be with him constantly.

This difficulty was met by Mrs. Bell offering to attend him, setting my mind at rest by saying that she could easily get help from next door if the patient turned restive, but upsetting me by saying that Sarah Gee would be only too glad to come in and do her bit of cooking.

There was no help for it; so I had to submit to this last bit of arrangement rather ungraciously, as I knew that it meant my friend Sarah come giggling to the box with my dinner.

However, I took another look at Ned, who was lying very quietly; but as soon as he saw me, he pulled at my sleeve, and pointed at the old corner.

"Never mind," I said, "Go to sleep, and forget that."

He shook his head restlessly from side to side.

"He won't let me," he said, despairingly. "But I shall be even with him yet—I shall be too strong for him."

"To be sure," I said, to humor him. "I would not be beaten by such an unsubstantial affair as that."

"No—you wouldn't, would you, John?" he said, earnestly.

But his excitement was short-lived, for his eyes looked sleepy and dim, as if the sedative the doctor had given was beginning to work.

"Did you take your medicine?" I said.

"Yes," he exclaimed, rousing up again, and shuddering; "but it was only brandy—nothing but brandy."

"Well, now go to sleep," I said.

I was going away, when he plucked my arm once more.

"You would not be beaten by an unsubstantial thing like that, would you, John?" he whispered; and then, pointing softly—"Under the bed now—waiting. Cowardly snake!—snake!"

He dozed off as he spoke; and, leaving him to the care of Mrs. Bell, I hurried off, sorry to find that I should be a few minutes late.

Tod was lying in wait for me as I reached the station-yard.

"Ten minutes late, John Black," he said, pompously, as he took out a blue envelope, and a notebook in which he made an entry. "But I suppose you anticipated this?"

He nodded shortly, and re-entered his room, leaving me to take my blue envelope to the signal-box, apologize to James Gummer, who took it all very good humoredly; and then, as soon as I had passed a couple of trains, I took out the letter—knowing very well, though, what it was.

It was, as I thought, a dismissal for general inattention and carelessness in the duty I had to perform; and, with such a recommendation, I knew it would be useless to try to get on another line.

"And yet I don't think I've been so very bad over my work," I said.

"Well, just as they like. I've got a fortnight to think about it; and my wants are not many. I dare say I can carry out my plans another way."

Then I settled quietly down to my work as if nothing had happened; called Tod a mean humbug, and felt very much better. The trains came and went till midday, when punctual to the time, the old lady came in her carriage, and the young lady in a veil with her; and I didn't know how it was, but while they were there I couldn't keep my mind from running on the past, and the days when poor dipsomaniac Ned was a fine fellow.

And there and then I uttered a bitter curse against immoderate drinking in any form.

The trains came and the trains went; and as the old lady's carriage rumbled off, I said, half aloud—

"Only another fortnight, and then there'll be another man. I hope he'll keep the line clear; but if they get such long, weary hours out of him as they've got out of me, you'll have your wish, and see some horrible pitch-in.

"It's too bad—it's villinous," I said, going over it all with no little indignation, patiently as I had often borne it before—"sixteen, eighteen, and twenty hours at a stretch in a signal-box. It's more than flesh and blood can stand. Then, too, there ought to be two men in a box, and they do keep it down to one. Well it's nothing to me."

Here I was busy for a bit; and as soon as I had done wiring on a message, I began thinking about poor old Ned, and wondering how he was.

"I hope I haven't killed him," I said to myself—"making the remedy worse than the disease. Poor fellow! If I could get him right, we might take a turn over into America or Australia.

"Ahem!" came from outside, towards the line.

And I wondered who it could be; when, looking out, there stood Sarah Gee, smiling and undulating, in gorgeous array, with a basket on her arm, containing my dinner.

This was reversing things. Mrs. Bell always came by the road, and went on to her husband, staying till he had eaten his meal, and then coming back to me for my empty basket. Here had fair Sarah been up to old Bell first, and had come to stay with me while I ate mine.

Whether it was innocence or artfulness I could not say, so I gave her the benefit of the doubt, and put a good face on the matter, as I asked her questions about poor Ned; while she giggled, and could talk about nothing but the weather, and the dinner getting cold:

"And it was so nice and hot when I started, Mr. Black."

"Confound the girl!" I muttered; "she don't expect that I am going to ask her up here, does she?"

"Are you ready, Mr. Black?"

"Quite," I replied, hanging out my fishing tackle for her to hook on to the basket, which she did, looking terribly disappointed. "No company allowed in my drawing-room, Miss Gee," I said.

"I do wish you'd call me Sarah," she said; gazing at me.

"I'll bring the basket back with me," I said, for I felt as if it was time to bring the hints at tender passages to an end.

"I shall be very much obliged, Miss Gee, if you'll send me word how my friend is at tea-time."

"Certainly, Mr. Black," she said, with a profound curtsey.

Then raising her chin in the air, the poor girl walked off, and I exclaimed—

"Thank Heaven!"

I had a couple of messages from Mrs. Bell during the afternoon and evening, both telling me not to be uneasy, as the doctor had been there again and again, and said that Hassell was going on all right. He had had a couple of fits of excitement; but the medicine had quieted him, and he was asleep.

That was satisfactory, and I looked forward to the evening with less dread.

The night came on dark and cloudy again. Mrs. Bell had sent my tea by the lad who brought the message about Ned; and I was standing thinking about Sarah Gee, and wondering whether I had not been a little brusk with the poor girl, when I heard a step, and Bell came thumping up the ladder.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

OLD BOOKS.—In the convent of the Dominicans at Boulogne are two books of Esdras, written on donkeys' skins, said to have been written by Esdras himself. The ancient Persians wrote on hide from which the hair was scraped. The shepherds wrote their songs with thorns upon straps of leather, which they wound round their crooks.

Scientific and Useful.

IMPURE ICE.—The Scientific American warns people against using ice taken from ponds containing impure water. Freezing does not kill the obnoxious germs so inimical to health.

SEASONING CASKS.—In seasoning casks by the addition of soda to the water, more substance is removed from the wood than when acid is employed, but less is removed if the wood is introduced into the cold solution, and the whole then heated.

RAILWAY CARS.—Ordinary American railway-cars weigh as follows: A sleeping-car of the usual pattern, about 66,000 pounds; a drawing-room car, 68,500 pounds; a passenger-car, 55 feet long, 41-inch wheels, and four-wheel trucks, weigh 46,310 pounds.

ZINC.—A single plate of perforated zinc, about a foot square, suspended over a gas jet, is said to retain the noxious emanations from the burning gas, which, it well known, destroy the bindings of books, tarnish the gilding and vitiate the atmosphere for breathing.

BRONZE.—Manganese bronze is growing rapidly in favor as a material for screw propeller blades. It is very strong, and its durability far exceeds that of steel, the life of which in propeller averages about three years. A propeller made of bronze will, however, last as long as the vessel, and afterwards be of considerable money value.

TO RENOVATE SILKS.—Sponge faded silks with warm water and soap; then rub them with a dry cloth on a flat board; afterwards iron them on the inside with a smoothing-iron. Old black silks may be improved by sponging them with spirits. In this case, the ironing may be done on the right side, thin paper being spread over to prevent glazing.

NOVEL WAGON.—A novel railway wagon has been invented and patented in Europe. It is an amphibious sort of a thing. When it ceases to run on rails on land it is capable of swimming on the water by means of pontons attached to both sides. It is provided with a bow and a stern-piece before being set afloat, and on the latter the motor is placed. Such a means of conveyance might be very useful in certain places.

Farm and Garden.

STOCK.—Weed out your stock and get rid of the poor milch and butter cows. The profit in a dairy comes wholly from the good cows, while the poor ones not only do not pay for their keep, but they reduce the profit made by the others.

THE SEASON'S WORK.—The canes of blackberries can be cut away as well at this time as at any other. Work of that character should be done while the ground is hard frozen, not only because it is easier, but because it enables a large proportion of necessary labor to be done before the busy season arrives.

CLOVER.—In seeding down clover this spring do not cover the seeds too deeply. A liberal supply of seed will do more to secure a good stand than anything else if preparation has been made in sowing plaster with it. Some farmers sow the seed while the snow is on the ground, but it is best to avoid heavy frosts if possible.

POULTRY.—At no season of the year is animal diet or its best substitute—milk—as necessary for fowls as at moulting time. A diet composed of boiled potatoes, mashed and mixed with ground oats and good wheat-bran, and the whole mixed with sour milk, will carry the fowls through about as well as any that can be given. Fowls should not be fed on whole corn or on cracked corn during their moult. Oats, wheat, buckwheat, etc., are better food until after the moult is over.

THE GARDEN.—The Gardeners' Monthly gives us the following practical directions for pruning ornamental shrubs on the approach of spring: Indiscriminate cutting back will not answer the desired purpose. Distinction must be made between slow and vigorous growers, and between those which bear flowers on old wood and those which flower on new growth. Such as grow too strong to flower well should be lightly pruned, and in the same individual the weakest shoots should be cut in more severely than the stronger ones.

DANDELIONS.—Dandelions are becoming more and more popular. The seed is sown in early spring when the ground can be made ready. The seed is small and delicate, and will not come up well upon land that is rough or lumpy, and is at all times slow in germinating. After the plants are well up thin out, to stand two or three inches apart in the rows. The tops are used as "greens," and the roots for root-beer and medicine. They yield is from ten to twenty bushels to the square rod, and the price varies from twenty-five cents to one dollar a bushel.

GRUBS.—A compost made up largely of soot or wood-ashes, with plenty of pulverized hen manure and a little sulphur, is highly recommended by some gardeners who have tried it for strawberries that have had their roots partly eaten by the grubs. Some recommend stool or hill culture as making it easier for one to hunt out and find the grubs. The grub usually works but a short distance under ground, and is easily found by one who knows how to hunt. The middle of a warm, sunny day is a good time to look for the grubs, as the leaves from the affected plants will soon make themselves known by their drooping appearance.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-SECOND YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, FEB. 24, 1892.

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"ALMOST SACRIFICED."

In this issue of THE POST we begin a short serial, "ALMOST SACRIFICED," by the author of "Barbara Graham." Our readers will find in it all the intensity of plot, strength of character, and interest of narration, which made that story such a general favorite.

COMPLAINING.

There is much complaining that is not pronounced in character, and that seems to have a somewhat fair show of reason in it. These are real trials and disappointments, vexations and failures, which often appear to us to warrant open complaint or silent depression, and there are seasons when gloom seems to overwhelm us like a thick cloud, which all our powers fail to penetrate or chase away. One idea, however, that is common to all complaints, whether small or great, reasonable or unreasonable, is that something or some one else is to blame for our unhappiness. If we could be convinced that we ourselves were the chief authors of it; that it sprang not from outward events nor from the conduct of others so much as from something within our own breasts; that it was, in fact, chiefly our own fault, and not other people's, and was what we brought to the world instead of what the world brought to us, our complaints would have but little force, and would soon give place to self-examination and self-discipline.

But it is sometimes urged that, however responsible we may be for our deeds, we cannot be held accountable for our feelings, as they come and go unbidden. Yet, if it is true that every feeling is dependent for its continuance upon the actions which it prompts, the feeling itself is at least mediately under our control. We cannot, it is true, by an effort of the will at once expel from the heart a gust of passion; but we can deny the angry utterances that tremble on our lips. We cannot suddenly kill a selfish desire, but we can refuse to commit the unjust or unkind actions that it prompts. We cannot immediately banish curiosity or a love of gossip, but we can withhold from them the food on which they thrive. In the same way, if worthy and honorable impulses are weak within us, we can strengthen them by following steadfastly that course of conduct which they suggest. We can increase our sense of justice by doing justly, our sympathetic feelings by tender and loving acts, our good temper by self-government, our revolution to submit by considering the folly of complaining.

Each time we actually perform what is disagreeable because it is the wise or the right thing to do, we are a little stronger to do the same thing again. Yet it does not follow that there is anything specially meritorious in choosing what is disagreeable for its own sake, still less in compelling the young to do so. Asceticism is as far removed from right principle as weak indulgence. There is no need for seeking difficulties or making artificial occasions for self-sacrifice. It is enough if we take hold of those that life itself presents, one by one as they occur, and dispose of each as our intelligence and moral sense suggests. Thus may we, without any harsh or unnatural means, accumulate the power which lies at the very foundation of our value to society, and our own highest welfare.

SANCTUM CHAT.

IT is said that no fewer than four thousand women are annually caught stealing from Paris counters, and the number of titled ladies seized with kleptomania while examining the fashions is almost incredible. Among recent culprits were a Russian princess, a French countess, an English duchess, and the daughter of a reigning sovereign.

—

IN England women are still hanged. The latest victim was Louisa Taylor, who had poisoned Mrs. Tregellis, at Maidstone. When Marwood, the hangman, began the pinioning process, the prisoner merely asked for a glass of water. She walked steadily to the scaffold, her last words being, "Oh, Lord, receive my spirit." As the executioner was fixing the rope around her neck she swayed, and would have fallen had not two wardens supported her. The bolt was drawn, and Mrs. Taylor fell a distance of nine feet, death being almost instantaneous. The hoisting of the black flag over the prison-gate was watched by about fifty persons.

—

THE following is a Boston paper's recipe for a popular preacher: "One-third voice and popular 'presence,' one-third sensational selection of topics, and one-third heresy. The proportion of ingredients varies somewhat in special cases, a little extra allowance of heresy, for example, serving to offset trifling deficiencies in personal appearance; but in general, the properties should be blended as we have indicated."

—

THAT portion of the report of the Executive Committee of the New York Prison Association, which refers to the Kings County Penitentiary, sounds like Reade's "Never Too Late to Mend." The contract system is in operation in the worst form. The convicts and free laborers work together, young girls being seated at the same table with convict women, and prisoners who are suspected of being concerned in attempts to escape are confined in an underground dungeon of solid masonry, totally dark and cold, with the object of extorting from them a confession of their implication.

—

JONATHAN LONGFELLOW, of Kent county, Del., is a prosperous farmer whom Bonaparte would have certainly thought worthy of a handsome reward. He has just taken unto himself in his seventieth year a third wife, forty years his junior. Number one bore six children, and number two the amazing total of twenty-two. The proper cultivation of so many olive branches was an expensive matter, but being by nature thrifty and ingenious, Mr. Longfellow hit upon an economical device which has served him well. He built a school-house for his family, and employed a young woman to superintend the wholesale education of his children; and now, his second wife having departed from the world which she had done so much to populate, he has married the teacher.

—

As to mimicry the giraffe has the most astonishing power of any animal. Inhabiting, as it does, the forest of Africa, and feeding upon the boughs of trees, its great size makes it a most conspicuous object. Its most dreaded enemies are the stealthy lion and man. In the regions it most frequents are many dead and blasted trunks of trees, and its mimicry is such that the most practiced eye has failed to distinguish a giraffe from a tree trunk, or a tree-trunk from a giraffe. It has even been said that a lion has looked long and earnestly at a giraffe, in doubt whether it was a tree or not, and then skulked away.

—

IN reference to the way in which Maud Muller, the name of Whittier's heroine, should be pronounced, a valued correspondent writes from Worcester, Mass.: "In reading the poems of any author, it is necessary, if possible, to understand something of what the author thought when the poem was written. It is related of the poet Whittier, that when he wrote Maud Muller he had no idea it would ever be so popular, and that he has remarked that had he supposed it would attain to such popularity he would have taken more pains in its writing. As to the way the name is pronounced, a lady teacher told me twelve years ago, that a friend of hers being in doubt as to the way Muller should be pronounced, asked the poet, who, as everyone knows, is as unselfish and courteous as he is talented and beloved; and he informed her that when he wrote the poem he had in mind the word in its usual way of pronunciation—Mul-ler (short "u")—and that he himself always pronounces it in that way.

—

ALTHOUGH of late the Chinese have begun to adopt vigorously iron-clads, railroads and telegraphs, they do not take kindly to the electric light. The Governor of Shanghai has objected formally to the introduction of the Brush system into the settlement, in a letter addressed to the senior foreign Consul. From what he has learned about the new method of illumination in translations from Western scientific papers, he believes that the accidents caused by electricity justify him in requesting the removal of all electric lamps in the interest of public safety. Too much risk is involved, he says. Hundreds of houses might be destroyed, millions of lives might be lost; even the walls of the city might be blown down if anything went wrong with the dynamo-electric generators. No Chinaman is permitted to use the electric light. There is a faint suspicion that the Governor had not received from the company enough, if any, money to keep him quiet, and this matter of presenting officials in China with something handsome when anything great is to be done or introduced, if neglected, is very serious at times. Of course, we meet with no obstruction of that sort in this enlightened part of the world, and the absurdity of it in China is laughable in the extreme.

—

A WESTERN letter-writer says: "Another not entirely new, and to me quite pleasing, fashion, I enjoyed a short time since at an evening party. A pretty young lady was seated at the piano playing an accompaniment, to which she whistled with exceeding clearness a lively air, following the notes precisely as in singing. Is the accomplishment—for it certainly is one to whistle perfectly—much in vogue? It is said to be growing in popularity with violin, guitar and banjo playing. There are schools, and teachers who give lessons—a pleasant task, one would think, to teach pretty lips how to pucker—at the houses of pupils; two young ladies whistle a duet to a piano accompaniment, or a quartette of ladies and gentlemen. The old adage of 'crowing hens,' etc., will certainly sink into oblivion. There is all the sweetness of a bird in the trill and warble of a well-executed whistle by a pretty girl, and a fascination beyond compare in the ripe red lips so archly pursed. For the parlor and adjacent neighbors, it is far less distracting than the squeak of a fiddle or the high staccato of an amateur prima donna.

—

THIS is the way dimples are manufactured in Chicago, if a reporter of that city tells the truth: "My arm being bare and the exact spot indicated, he (the operator) placed a small glass tube, the orifice of which was extremely small, upon the spot. This tube had working within it a piston, and was so small that when the handle was drawn up the air was exhausted from the tube and it adhered to the flesh, raising a slight protuberance. Around this raised portion the operator daintily tied a bit of scarlet silk, and then took away his suction machine. The little point of skin that was thus raised he sliced off with a wicked-looking knife, bringing the blood. I tried hard not to scream, but it was so unexpected that I had to. Then he bound up the arm, placing over the wound a small silver object like an inverted cone, the point of which was rounded and polished. This little point was adjusted so as to depress the exact center of the cut. Then he told me to go away and not touch the spot until the next day. When I came that time he dressed my arm again, and this operation was repeated for five days, when the wound was healed. The silver cone was removed, and there, sure enough, beneath it was the prettiest dimple in the world! And all I had to pay was $10."

—

THERE is no animal we know of born into the world in a state of greater helplessness than the human infant, and none more dependent upon artificial means to keep up the animal heat. It would very soon succumb to the cold if not protected. This is proved by the fact that a very much larger proportion of children die during the winter than during the summer months, although as regards the mortality of the young and the middle-aged there is very little difference between those seasons. The older a child gets the better it becomes able to resist cold, but—and we would that mothers would bear this in mind—not until a boy or girl is well into his or her teens should fostering warmth be looked upon otherwise than as a friend, or cold otherwise than as a deadly foe. Children in the cradle are seldom or never neglected by well-to-do parents, but it is when the child begins to run about, and is able to go out of doors, that mistakes are made about the clothing, which often lead to speedily fatal illnesses, or sow the seeds of future ailments, which render life a misery and a burden, which can be only laid down at the portals of the tomb. Instead of studying warmth and comfort in the clothing of their children, many mothers study only fashion.

SECRET LOVE.

BY E. B. LYTTON.

She stood beside the restless sea—
Waves sang for her, they sobbed for me.
The moonlight showed upon her face
The joy that gave her features grace;
But with her dreams I had no part,
No thought of me was in her heart;
Far different thoughts now gave her glow—
Waves sang for her and sobbed for me.

I saw her eyes with rapture shine
As steps were heard; they were not mine;
Two shadows closed upon the sand,
With warmest love he clasped her hand—
They knew not then that I was there.
My love (unknown) joined with despair
To dull my senses; yet the sea
Still sang for her, but—sobbed for me!

An Artist's Wife.

BY WILSON BENNOR.

"ONE of you girls must go to her at once," said my mother.

"But, mamma," pleaded Oriana, "I can't go, for I'm in the midst of my course at college."

"And I can't go!" breathlessly added Louisa, who had just engaged herself to young Mr. Leggett, who kept the stationery store at the corner, and was in a fool's paradise of bliss.

"Girls, don't talk such nonsense!" said my mother briskly. "Here is your cousin, Patsey Pounsett, ill out in Wisconsin, and needing care and companionship. Some one must go there."

"Let Flossy go," suggested Oriana.

"Yes," chimed in Louisa; "why not Flossy?"

"But Flossy is such a child," said my mother in a perturbed voice. And——"

But here I dropped the cat out of my lap and rose, trying to look as tall as possible.

"I am nearly eighteen," said I. "And, oh, mamma, do let me go to rich old cousin Patsey, and perhaps she will make me her heiress."

"Dear, dear!" said my mother, "what can have put such mercenary ideas into the child's head?"

"But isn't she very rich?" I questioned.

"She is very eccentric," said my mother.

"Well, then, of course she's rich," I nodded. "Eccentric old maids always are. And oh, it will be such fun, and I should so like to see what Wisconsin is like. I suppose they have bears there, and giraffes, and all such wild beasts."

And I ran laughing away after the kitten, which had frisked out among the daffodils in the garden.

Not, however, so far but I could hear my mother saying——

"What a child she is!"

And Oriana, answering with a laugh——

"Oh, let her go! If cousin Patsey should take a fancy to her, it might be the making of her fortune. Who knows?"

So they bought me a new dress, retrimmed my plush hat with cherry-satin ribbon, and sent me off to Wisconsin, with Oriana's new travelling-bag and mamma's waterproof cloak.

I had never travelled before by myself, but I quite enjoyed the novelty of the situation.

I had my novel to read, my little basket of fruit and sandwiches to fall back upon, and all the flitting scenery to study from my car-window—until, getting out at Earlsdale, to buy some oranges that had taken my girlish fancy, I mistook the car, and found myself, alone and bewildered, in the midst of strange faces.

"My bag!" I cried. "Oh, I left my bag on the seat, and now it is gone! Oh, dear! oh dear! What shall I do?"

And then a tall, pleasant-faced young man came forward.

I had seen him once or twice before, passing through the train.

"Was it a black canvas-bag," said he, "with 'O. H.' on it? And was there a book and shawl lying beside it?"

And I answered—

"Yes."

"It is in the last car," said he. "You were sitting there, I think. Allow me to conduct you thither. The train is in motion, and it will be difficult to pass from one car to another."

And thus, to my infinite relief, I found my treasures undisturbed, and, all-forgetful of mamma's many cautions, chatted and laughed with my new acquaintance all the way.

I confided to him that I was going to a rich cousin, who would probably adopt me—that I never had been away from home before—that my name was Flora Harper—that my cousin was called Patsey Pounsett—that I had five pounds of gold in my pocket-book, and a new checked silk dress, with fourteen little flounces up the front.

And not until he had put me in a cab at the station, and directed the driver to go to Miss Patsey Pounsett's, in the Cedar Road, did I realize how foolishly and unnecessarily communicative I had been.

"Oh dear," I thought to myself, "I hope he's not a burglar or a housebreaker."

My cousin Patsey did not live in a chateau or a picturesque Swiss cottage.

It was a tumble-down old farmhouse, with a stagnant pond in front, and two dismal weeping-willows at the back.

She lay very ill in a dirty old parlor, with a fire of damp logs sulking in the fire-place, and a general smell of camphor about the premises.

She was an ugly, yellow-faced old woman, with a hooked nose, and a moustache on her wrinkled upper lip.

"Oh!" said she. "You are Mary Harper's girl from down East?"

"Yes," said I faintly, as I looked around at the uncarpeted floor and mildewed walls. "What can I do for you, cousin Patsey?"

"You can take the bellows and blow up the fire," said the old crone. "And you can make me some oatmeal gruel. And to-morrow you can go out and sell yarbs for me."

"Sell——" I hesitated, uncertain whether I had heard aright.

"Yarbs!" screeched the old woman. "Ya-a-arbs! Don't you hear me? Cat-nip and penny-rile, and tarragan, and life everlastin' and sich—the garret's full of 'em. That's the way I makes my livin', sellin' yarbs. And I was mortal 'feard I'd lose all my custom with this pesky rhiumatiz. But it's all right now you've come."

So this was my cousin Patsey.

This was the life of rich refinement to which I had fancied myself dedicated.

I cried myself to sleep that night, and dreamed I was a beggar-girl plodding from door to door.

I was up betimes in the morning to cook cousin Patsey's breakfast over the kitchen stove—I, the petted darling of the household, who had never been allowed at home to know a single care—to clean her room and comb out her tangled white hair.

And then with many reproaches over my sluggishness and lack of "faculty," I was sent to fill a basket with the little bunches of dried herbs which were dangling from hooks in the beams overhead.

"What am I to do with them, cousin Patsey?" said I feebly.

"Take 'em into town," said Miss Patsey. "Sell 'em."

"But where?" pleaded I.

"From door to door," responded my witch-like cousin. "Go everywhere. Tell 'em they're Miss Patsey Pounsett's yarbs. Everybody knows me. Twopence a bunch for the small ones, fourpence for the large ones. And don't let the grass grow under your feet, for I have got to take my hot drink at one o'clock, and you must be home to make it for me."

And this was the fashionable career of which I had dreamed at Powder City.

Well, what was I to do?

I could not go back to the East, for I had not money enough.

I couldn't write home, for the matter of the "yarbs" was too pressing to admit, in cousin Patsey's eyes, of even a half-hour's delay.

Moreover, there was the old creature, sick, alone and in trouble, and I was too loyal to dream of abandoning her.

So, without more ado, I took the basket, and set forth on my weary way, blushing if any one looked at me—ready to cry if any shrill-voiced housekeeper decried the value of my wares.

I sold some herbs—enough to buy Miss Patsey's medicine, and a little knuckle of veal to boil into nourishing soup—and came home, with muddy boots, weary limbs, and a considerably depreciated valuation of myself.

Cousin Patsey had a great many questions to ask, and appeared to think that I might have driven a deal more profitable business if only I had chosen.

But she was feeble and weak, and I pitied her too much to rebel.

On the third day I chanced to meet my travelling-companion—the tall, dark young man, with the bright eyes, who had been instrumental in finding my travelling-bag on my journey.

He was in a store where I had meekly proffered my wares, and he stepped eagerly forward, with a smile of recognition.

"Miss Harper!" he exclaimed, offering his hand.

"Do you want any herbs?" said I, with a mischievous twinkle in my eyes. "Catnip, tarragan, feverfew! Only twopence a bunch! And quite fresh and genuine."

"I'll buy the whole basket," said he.

"No," I pronounced, "that wouldn't be business. But if you choose to select half-a-dozen assorted bunches——"

So he bought them, with such wondering eyes that I felt myself constrained to explain.

"My cousin Patsey isn't rich at all," said I. "She earns her living by selling these herbs. And as she is ill and unable to sell them herself, I am acting as her proxy."

"You are a heroine," said he earnestly.

"A very involuntary one," I answered, sighing and smiling.

When he had gone out of the store, I could not help asking the old woman behind the counter who he was.

"It's Mr. Aylmer," she answered. "He's an artist, miss, as paints picters, and they do say as how he gets dreadful big prices for a bit of canvas as you could cover with a dinner-plate."

Mr. Aylmer came out to the farmhouse to see me the next day.

He brought me a bunch of flowers, and sat and chatted with cousin Patsey for a long time.

The old crone eyed me keenly after he was gone.

"I don't approve of followers, as a general thing," said she; "but I reckon John Aylmer is a good fellow—and I sort o' think, Flora, that he likes you."

"But, cousin Patsey, he has only seen me twice before!" cried I, turning very red.

"That makes no difference," said she, sharply. "Love don't go by the multiplication table. I've lived solitary and alone all my life; but I don't want them as I'm fond of to do the same. It's too dreary—a deal too dreary!"

I stayed with cousin Patsey a month, doing all the drudgery of her wretched house, selling herbs for her, keeping up a cheerful face through it all, and then she died—died suddenly and alone, in the dead of night.

They buried her, and I prepared to return to the East; not, however, until John Aylmer had made me promise that, if he came for me in the autumn, I would be his wife.

"We shall be poor, Flossy," he said; "but love is better than gold."

I was sitting in the station waiting for the train, with John talking to me, when old Mr. Dodge, the white-whiskered lawyer, made his appearance.

"Miss Flossy," he said, "perhaps you hadn't better go East just yet. There's a will, you know, and all Miss Pounsett's property is left to you."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Dodge," said I, "but it's only a hovel and a swamp, and Milo Mears has offered me sixty dollars for it all."

"Yes," said the lawyer; "but the old chimney blew down this morning, and there's an iron box, under the hearth-stone, containing ten registered two hundred Sacramento bonds, made out in Miss Patsey's name; and, of course, they are all yours."

I looked at John with sparkling eyes.

"So I am an heiress, after all," said I. "Oh, John, dear John, I only wish it was a hundred times as much, so that I could lay it all at your feet!"

For Miss Pounsett had a deal of the miserly element in her nature, and had died in poverty sooner than to break in upon her idolized hoard.

And that is how it happens that I am living out here in Wisconsin, an artist's happy wife.

And to the end of my days I shall always love the smell of peppermint and rue, boneset and penny-royal, cousin Patsey's treasured "yarbs."

The Old Grange.

BY BLAKE PANSON.

THE dreary old hall is drearier than ever on this snowy wintry evening.

The calender says that spring ought to be coming up this way, but instead, the year seems to have gone backward, and brought in a fresh supply of cold and storm.

The wind is howling about the many gables of the Grange, and dashing soft handfuls of snowflakes against the latticed windows.

Maurice Thurston shivers as he sits in his great arm-chair at the lonely hearth within the library, and thinks, although it is not much past twilight, that the hour for ghosts might just as well be come, for the whole place is full of them.

The fire is burning blue too, as if it felt the presence of the ghosts.

Maurice Thurston rises forward and stirs it with a sort of savage impatience into a brighter blaze; and then he seizes the big volume on the table beside him, and tries to bury himself in it.

But it will not do; even there the ghosts ferret him out.

So, with a long and deep drawn sigh, he gives up the attempt to escape from them; and leaning his elbows on the arms of his chair, his head in his two hands, he closes his eyes, the better to confront the apparitions which are haunting all the dark and sealed-up chambers of his heart.

There was the old Squire King of the Grange, Agnes' grandfather, and Maurice Thurston's cousin several times removed, yet who had been as Maurice's own grandfather, so kind had he been to the orphaned lad, letting him grow up under the friendly Grange roof in company with Agnes, and with Squire King's young ward, Treherne, who, from his boyhood, had been Agnes' lover.

Then there was Agnes herself.

Maurice puts his hand over his eyes, as if he could thus shut out the round, girlish face, the tangle of fair hair across the low, broad brow, the dancing merry eyes, as blue and clear as the very sky itself.

How could they have had guile in them? And yet, she had herself confessed her guilt.

If any but herself had tried to prove it, he could not have listened for a moment; but when her own lips confessed it.

Maurice leaning back there in his chair, is no more in the lonely library.

He is one of a knot of people gathered about old Squire King's bed, where the old man lies propped up on pillows, yet looking from one to the other of the group with stern and angry eyes, in which there is no sign of weakness while they yet are holding death at bay.

The hand of death lies heavy on him, and he knows it; but first, before he yields to that one conqueror whom none can long resist, he will have the truth about that paper he is holding in his hand.

"Some one has thought I was already dying," he said, wrath making his voice strong and firm once more. "Some one has supposed that I would die without further thought of my will—that I would never come out of that last swoon, and so would never be able to sign this will which I had drawn up some time ago, but never signed. The will was in my desk in the dressing-room yonder, and some one has been good enough and provident enough to sign it for me."

There was a startled movement through the room; then a dead silence as those last sneering words died away.

People were looking at each other furtively.

Which one among them was the forger?

Surely the will itself would tell? at least would give the broad hint as to who would profit by its being signed.

If only the old man would read it out.

But he did not.

He only waited a moment, and then said again, slowly and emphatically—

"Some one has been good enough to sign it for me, I say. It is cleverly done; if I had been reasonable enough to pass off in that swoon, the signature would be as good as mine. I should like to know who it is that has been obliging enough to take the trouble out of my hand."

They were all looking at each other still, as if most of them suspected some one in the group.

Young Treherne was watching Maurice Thurston narrowly.

Maurice was surely looking blankly about from face to face of the assembled kinsfolk of the dying man.

It is strange how many have remembered the tie of blood now, who thought but little of it when old Lawrence King was hale and hearty, and had every prospect of keeping his money with a firm grasp in his own hand.

Maurice was thinking this and looking blankly about him, when his eye was caught by Agnes.

Instantly, as if she could not brave his glance, hers was averted.

But not before she had time to see the dread—nay more, the abject terror—in hers.

She was trembling visibly from head to foot.

No one who looked at her, however carelessly, could mistake the signs of trepidation.

And every one was looking at her now.

Even the old man.

He broke the silence.

"Agnes——"

She gave a guilty start.

She looked round wildly, and when she saw how they all stared at her, her strength failed her, and she shrank down shuddering on her knees at the bedside.

"Agnes," he said again, hoarsely and sternly, "if you know anything——"

At that she broke into wild sobbing.

She could not answer.

She could only cower there, hiding her face.

It was young Treherne who broke the pause.

He had gone forward to her, but she did not seem to heed him, and he now said to his guardian—

"Speak to her, sir. Certainly it is not she who did it. She has merely come to a knowledge of the fact in some way, I dare swear. Speak to her, for I'll answer for it she is innocent."

It was natural, of course, that Treherne should believe it of his betrothed.

But no one shared his faith in all that group.

Maurice, who loved her at the least as well, though he had never told her so, might have believed it too, but for that strange confession in her eyes as they met his.

Yet he might even still have fancied he had read them wrong, but for the girl's own words that followed her grandfather's stern appeal—

—"Child, if you have had any accomplice in this guilt—if any one has helped you in it, or advised you to it. If any one has," he cried, lashing himself into a burst of fury, out of the stern calm in which he had begun to speak—"if any one has, give me his name, and he shall bear the brunt and you go free."

At that she lifted her head hurriedly.

"No one," she said—"no one has helped me in it, or advised me to it."

They all heard the voice, a trifle hard and mechanical, but yet not without a falter in it.

Then her head sank down again upon her hands, and there was silence.

It was broken by a slight, shrill sound—the tearing of paper.

The old squire's shaking hands had folded the will and rent it across, again and yet again.

So there remained no witness of her go...

It was the last act which those old hands did.

That night he died.

But first the girl was gone.

When and how no one could tell.

For when the rustle of that shredded paper ceased, she rose up from her knees and left the room without a word, without a look, not seeming to see Treherne when he would have stopped her, and only shuddering when she went by Maurice Thurston.

When the old man had passed away, and some one went to her own room to tell her, she was gone.

And no one had found any trace of her in all these years.

Treherne is gone too.

He has been wandering about in search of her, every one says.

His ghost is here to night, and Maurice is looking kindly at it, as he leans forward there, with his hands over his eyes—kindly, although the young men were never very good friends in the old time.

As for Agnes, it goes without saying that Maurice too has had search made for her, though for his part he stays on at the Grange all these five years, lest haply she might wander back.

But it is hard work, and to-night the ghosts are gruesome.

What is that?

He lifts his head.

He has not heard a footfall, but is conscious of a presence.

He lifts his head and there stands Agnes, just across the hearth.

Agnes?—or the ghost of Agnes?

It is just a little older, just a little paler, but it is smiling at him through soft tears, like a warm, April sky.

And when he does not move, not stir—

nay, barely breathes—she comes and kneels down at his side and says—

"Give me my pardon first, before you say anything else to me. Maurice, Maurice, can you ever forgive me, that through all these years I thought it was you who had tampered with that will? I thought so until Owen Treherne told me just a week ago that it was he who was the guilty one."

"Treherne?"

She puts up her hand to stop him.

"Maurice, he is dead. You must forgive him, as I did, when he traced me out at last, and told me. He was dying then, Maurice, believe me, I would have never suspected you if I had not been sure that I had seen you in the very act.

"There was but a dim light burning in the dressing-room where the desk was; he had gone in with your great coat on, and your hat slouched down upon his brow, that if he should be seen coming or going, he should not be recognised.

"You know that will gave me my portion with the children; not with the grandchildren; but there was also a special mention of you, which made it not so improbable.

"Oh, Maurice!" she breaks off, "can you forgive me for believing it?"

He has leaned forward, taking both her hands.

"And yet you screened me at such cost! Agnes, why did you do it? Agnes, my darling, did you—can you—love me?"

He has drawn her closer, and it is against his shoulder that she murmurs her confession.

"I did not mean to be false to Owen Treherne. But they pledged me to him as a child almost; and, Maurice, all my heart went out to you.

* * * * * * *

So there are no more ghosts at the old Grange.

Love's sunshine put them all to rout.

Through a Curtain.

BY PERCY VERE.

THE drawing-room at the Kents' was a large bright, lofty apartment, well-furnished, in the usual acceptance of that term.

Velvet carpets were under foot, cheese cloth curtains, trimmed with antique lace, draped the bay-windows, plush covered chairs were invitingly disposed around.

And the velvet *portiere*?

Mention must be made of the *portiere*—what a struggle there had been to obtain it.

Never did victor in a mighty battle sigh more contentedly over his success than the only daughter of the house of Kent.

"Folding-doors are out of date, papa," she had avowed imploring, imperiously.

"No one has them now. They are vulgar, inartistic.

"We must have a *portiere*, crimson plush, to match the furniture.

"It will look so graceful, you know, falling from the ebony pole and gold rings.

"Well, I must have it, papa; so there's no use talking!"

And when Miss Kent put down her foot with that energetic stamp there was no use talking, and her easily intimidated father generally, with quiet wisdom, produced his cheque-book.

She sat now, and looked at it approvingly.

Curled up in one of the big plush easy-chairs, in her soft, light wrapper, she reminded one of nothing so much as a white drowsy kitten.

An odd little piece of contradiction, with a name too imposing for her diminutive person, was Miss Callidora Kent.

Her admirers called her a beauty; her friends a jolly little thing; casual acquaintances, stern old maids, and jealous girl companions, pronounced her a foolish, dress-loving coquette.

Dress-loving?

Who would see a woman without the thousand bewitching vanities of the toilet, and a desire to look her prettiest?

And too many admirers will give a girl the title of coquette, often without the sanction of her own conduct.

She snuggled around a little more contently in her chair, as the door opened and her cousin came into the room.

She was a tall, rather good-looking girl, with a pair of handsome brown eyes.

She held a broom in her hand, and had a martyred expression on her face.

She carried a certain high-tragedy air into the commonest details of everyday life, and dusted a room or cooked a custard with the half disdainful haughtiness of a dethroned queen.

"Lovely!

"Isn't it Frances Eva?"

The demure little Philistine, who usually succeeded in spreading for herself a bed of unrumpled rose-leaves, nodded toward the plush curtains.

The other contemptuously ignored the remark.

"With whom were you last evening, if I may ask?" in a gentle injured tone.

"Oh, yes!" cheerfully.

"I went to the Queen's with Fred Halleck."

She uncoiled deliberately, and rose to view herself in the mirror.

A small face, with a row of curl-papers across the forehead—a pair of mischievous, hazel eyes—a straight, pretty, impertinent nose, and lips that could charm with the most enchanting of smiles, flickers of modern, shallow wit, and occasionally saucily spoken slang.

"Callidora, are you going to marry Fred Halleck?"

"Marry?

"That depends.

"His grandmother—fabulously wealthy, barbarously eccentric—is dying.

"If she dies loving him financially, yes; if ignoring him financially, no.

"There lies the case in a nutshell."

"If so unfortunate, who will succeed him in your favor?"

"Why, that's so, Frances Eva—I forgot to tell you about him—the gentleman I met at Mrs. Shenbrook's dance."

She turned from the mirror with a sudden flicker of animation.

"He is so handsome, Frances Eva, I danced with him three times.

"He asked permission to call, and his name is Silbert Richardson.

"Oh, I had almost forgotten to mention—he is as poor as the proverbial church mouse."

A week passed, during which Miss Callidora Kent, taking advantage of Mr. Halleck's absence by his grandmother's death-bed, laughed and flirted, and went to the opera with handsome Silbert Richardson.

One morning he was announced, and shown into the front parlor, where a bright-eyed little siren, in the most artfully artful of morning costumes, was industriously feeding her goldfish.

He was not at all diffident or bashful, this handsome Bohemian to whom pretty Miss Kent had lost her heart, so he came to the point immediately.

"Callidora," he said, "will you marry me?"

The bell rang; the door opened, and there was the sound of footsteps in the hall.

"I am very sorry," she said, in a choking voice—and indeed she was—"I am sorry, but I can't."

"Why not?"

"Don't ask me," imploringly.

"But I will. Are you going to marry Halleck?"

"I suppose so."

"And yet you love me?"

"Yes," with a big sob.

"Then you have seen the morning papers?"

"Yes."

"And know that Fred Halleck is heir to all his grandmother's money?" he continued.

She nodded.

"Is that why you are going to marry him?"

"Yes, that is why," emphatically and angrily.

"Thanks for your candor," in coldest, politest tones.

And, like a slender, black-coated iceberg, exit Mr. Richardson.

"Please, umm," shrilly inquired Jemima, the maid-of-all-work, popping a grimy face inside the door, "did you see Mr. Halleck?"

"Mr. Halleck?

"No.

"Did he call?"

"Yes, mum."

"When?"

"'Bout the same time as Mr. Richardson.

"He went into the back parlor, sayin' he'd wait until you was disengaged.

"He's gone now, mum."

"Gone!"

"Yes, mum."

She flung the dividing curtain aside, and rushed into the next room.

There was just a line scrawled on a leaf torn from a memorandum book, and lying on the table.

It was Fred's big slapdash hand and read as follows—

"The plush *portiere* is something new, is it not? It is very convenient.

"HALLECK."

Miss Kent sank down, stormily sobbing out remorseful words, and bitter beneficial tears.

"It was all that horrid plush *portiere*!

"He could never have heard through the dear old folding-doors.

"Oh, my goodness!

"It has sent away the man I love, and the man who loves me.

"Oh, how I hate it!"

* * * * * * *

"Papa!" imperiously commanded Miss Callidora Kent, three hours later, standing tear-worn and sorrowful eyed, in her father's office, "send men immediately—immediately—to put up the folding-doors!"

"But, my dear——"

"It's no use talking, papa—I must have them!

"Yes, I know—the plush *portiere*.

"But I never want to see it again.

"I hate it—there!

"Folding-doors, papa—vulgar, massive, heavy, and three feet thick!"

Intense Suffering Relieved.

A gentleman in Magnolia, Miss., whose wife had been a tearful sufferer from Neuralgia, made a trial of Compound Oxygen in her case. After six weeks he made this report: "Since my wife commenced the use of Compound Oxygen, she has not had an attack of headache. She was threatened once or twice, but it passed off; and she tells me to-day that her head feels more natural now than it has since she commenced to suffer with neuralgia. We feel happy that we were induced to try your treatment, and think that it has saved my wife from the grave or the asylum, to one of which she certainly would have gone had relief not been found." Our Treatise on Compound Oxygen, its nature, action, and results, with reports of cases and full information sent free. DRS. STARKEY & PALEN, 1109 & 1111 Girard St., Philadelphia, Pa.

That Sunday.

BY JULIUS THATCHER.

"NOBODY goes to church on Easter Day without a new suit in the very latest fashion!" said Mrs. Clairville.

"Certainly not!" said Alicia, her eldest daughter.

"Mrs. Pelham has written to Paris for a new bonnet, to my certain knowledge."

"And, of course," added Emily, the youngest section of the house of Clairville, "As you are spending the winter with us, Madeline, you will be expected not to disgrace us."

Madeline Moray looked from one to the other of the speakers with a troubled look of countenance.

"But, aunt Clairville," said she, "mamma writes me that our old cousin Zephaniah and his wife have come from Maine, very poor, and that we must economize as much as possible.

"They are very old, and they need a great many little luxuries, and whatever——"

Mrs. Clairville's face darkened visibly.

"Madeline," said she, "will you never forget that you belong to a farmer's family down east?

"Your cousin Zephaniahs are nothing to me.

"Of course, while you are my guest, I shall expect you to dress as becomes your station as my niece."

Madeline knitted her pretty brows in sore perplexity after aunt Clairville had rustled out, leaving a strong odor of patchouli behind her.

She had a some bank-notes yet left of the store which they had scraped together at home, when they sent her to spend a winter in Boston with aunt Clairville, and she took it from her purse and smoothed it out upon her desk.

Twenty-five dollars!

She had hoped to save it all for cousin Zephaniah.

Her pretty shot silk, with the dameuse front, was very fresh and pretty still—she had only worn it some half-dozen times—and her neat little split-straw hat would look very nice, if she bought new ribbon for it and re-arranged the flowers.

At least that was the mental conclusion at which she had arrived, when Mrs. Clairville issued her commands, binding as an Imperial ukase, that a new Easter suit was among the necessities.

Madeline knew very well that she was pretty.

She never looked into the glass without perceiving the difference between her fresh apple-blossom of a face, and the enamelled and roughed complexions of her city cousins.

She knew that her hair was like burnished coils of gold, her long-lashed eyes like stars, and she would have liked a new Easter suit as well as any one—and the bonnets in Madame Printemps's window looked infinitely beautiful in her eyes, with their French roses and perfectly simulated violets; but there was the old man and his enfeebled wife to remember—the ancient relics of a bygone generation, who had outlived the sympathy of almost all the world.

"No," said Madeline to herself, "I must not spend this money, Easter suit or no Easter suit."

So she sat herself down, in the rainy March afternoon, to rip up the shot silk dress and alter it over so that ever Alicia and Emily should not know it for the same.

But, with all her skill in amateur dress-making, the folds would not hang stylishly, the old creases would obtrude themselves on the eye, and the costume proclaimed, in its every glisten and puff—"Made over, made over!"

Emily Clairville shook her head.

"Madeline," said she, "it is of no use.

"You never can wear that dress! And your hat, too!

"A plain split-straw, without so much as a French flower."

Madeline burst into tears.

"Very well, Emily," she said. "Then I will remain at home.

"You need not fear that I will disgrace the congregation of St. Etheldreda on Easter Sunday."

And this pledge evidently relieved the mind of Miss Clairville.

And the two elegant sisters did not take the trouble, when Captain Brabazan dropped in to five o'clock tea, to send up word to Madeline that there was company in the parlor.

"I suppose she don't care to see me," the captain thought, with a sinking heart, when at last he went away, after having lingered as long as politeness would admit.

"I suppose he never asked for me," Madeline said to herself as, from her window, she saw his retreating figure saunter slowly down the street.

"Well, it matters less than ever now about the Easter suit.

"Nobody will know whether I have one or not."

But when Easter Eve came, and Madeline was crying softly in her own room, to think of the radiant spring sunset that was flooding all the world at home, the waiter came grinning up to the door.

"Please, Miss Maddy," he said, "hyar's a basket o' laylocks.

"Real springy-smellin', I do declare!

"Wid de cappen's card!—Cappen Brabazan, miss!"

Madeline uttered an exclamation of delight.

Oh, the lovely purple things! Clusters of lilac fragrance.

Delicious reminders of the springtide at home.

Oh, how kind it was of Captain Brabazan to remember that she was a country girl, exiled here among brick walls.

Madame Cressonde's young women sat up until twelve o'clock that night, to finish the three elegant costumes which Mrs. Clairville and her daughters ordered.

The three bonnets did not come home until Sunday morning.

But Madeline watched them sail forth to church, to the glitter of golden sunbeams and the clanging of melodious bells, like three fashion-plates.

And then she put on her plain little "made-over dress" and, taking a fresh cluster of lilacs from the vase of water, pinned it across the split-straw hat.

"There," she thought, as she tied the strings under her chin, "no Paris exotic ever looked half so sweet as that!

"And I am sure Heaven will incline its ear no less favorably to my prayers than if I went to St. Etheldreda's in Worth's newest design."

And she crept to the little church in the adjoining street, which had long gone out out of fashion, and where the spectacled old clergyman practiced all the austerities of the early fathers, through dire necessity.

Easter Sunday!

She sat there, listening to the anthems, and thinking of the dear ones at home, and wondering if cousin Zephaniah and his poor old wife would ever know that she, Madeline Moray, had cast her mite to relieve their sore necessities, and recalling vaguely the poor widow whose offering had once been so precious in the holiest of eyes.

Hers was not much now, but she also had given it from a free and willing heart.

As she moved quietly, and with reverent, downcast eyes, out of the church, some one stepped to her side.

"You have dropped something, Miss Moray," said Captain Brabazan.

And he held up the cluster of lilacs, drooping now, and a little faded.

She put her hand up to her bonnet with a scarlet blush.

"Your lilacs, Captain Brabazan," she said.

His face brightened.

"I am proud that you deemed them worthy of your wearing.

"Your cousin told me that you was such an anchorite that you did not care for flowers, or books, or society—that you were not even going to church on Easter Sunday."

"I?" cried Madeline.

"Oh, Captain Brabazan, I like all three!

"I cried over your flowers when they came last night.

"They seemed to me like dear friends from home.

"And I wore them in my bonnet because—because I could not afford artificial blossoms.

"There! now you know just how poor I am."

And she laughed, even while the roseate tinge suffused her cheek.

"I do not know whether you are poor or not," said he; "but I do know that I think you the nearest to perfection of any girl whom I ever saw."

"May I tell you all about it?" she asked hurriedly, "for I do not want you to think me avaricious or semi-barbarian, as my cousins sometimes pronounce me. And then you shall tell me whether you think I am right or wrong."

They walked slowly home from church in the soft, bland sunlight of that Easter Day, and when they reached the brown stone mansion in Silverston street, Captain Brabazan went in and formally asked Mrs. Clairville's permission to address her niece with a view to marriage.

That was Madeline Moray's Easter gift.

A man's true and loyal heart—the dawn of a great happiness, over a life which up to this hour had been but chill and solitary.

There was no denying that Mrs. Clairville was much disappointed.

Emily and Alicia had been in society three seasons now, without having received any eligible offer; and it did seem strange that this pale, quiet little girl from the backwoods, as Mrs. Clairville contemptuously expressed it, should have carried off such a glittering prize as Captain Brabazan; for it never occurred to them that Madeline's sweet unselfishness and quiet self-denial could possibly have had anything to do with the matter.

And so long as old cousin Zephaniah and his wife lived, Captain Brabazan made them an annual allowance which was ample for their simple wants.

A CORRESPONDENT tells an anecdote of an old woman, who, when her pastor said to her, "Heaven has not deserted you in your old age," replied, "No, sir, I have a very good appetite still."

Change of Mind.

I declined to insert your advertisement of Hop Bitters last year, because I then thought they might not be promotive of the cause of Temperance, but find they are, and a very valuable medicine, myself and wife having been greatly benefited by them, and I take great pleasure in making them known.

REV. JOHN SEAMAM,
Editor *Home Sentinel*, Afton, N. Y.

Our Young Folks.

VERA'S GRANDMOTHER.

BY MINNIE DOUGLAS.

THERE had been great excitement all day at Fernleigh Vicarage, for a daughter—the second of five children—was expected home, and she had been absent for a year, visiting her grandmother in Yorkshire.

"I has almost forgotten her," ungrammatically mused the baby, Ethel by name, and nearly three years old.

"So haven't I," announced Master Jack, nodding wisely.

"Sue's a year older than me, and always did what she liked best herself."

"And so prevented you from doing the same, eh, Jack?" coolly observed Marion, the eldest daughter, aged sixteen.

Jack did not reply in words, but the contortion of his features as he looked after his departing sister was wonderful.

"It's getting dark.

"Why don't they come, and save our kicking our heels all night?"

Just then there came the sound of wheels, and all the family and two of the servants ran to the old Gothic porch to welcome back the vicar and the daughter he had made a long journey to bring home.

"Here she is, mother!" said the father's cheerful voice.

"But don't let the youngsters smother her—we've had a tiring day."

A tall girl descended from the carriage, and she was tenderly clasped in her mother's arms.

She was quite a head taller than her mother, though only fifteen, and her face, as seen by the hall lamp, was dark and handsome.

"Not a bit like the rest of 'em.

"Never was," whispered cook to old nurse, who was too busy watching for an embrace to trouble to answer her.

Every child was kissed, and then old nurse, heartily, but in a silent way.

"Supper is ready.

"Take Vera to her room, Marion," said Mrs. Fairbank.

"And, Lottie, go bring your father's slippers."

A shy little girl of ten, whose lank fair locks fell round a pale little face, ran to obey the last order, casting awe-struck glances upon the quantity of luggage that had just arrived by the cart, and then saying softly to Jack, whom she met in the hall—

"Why, Vera only took one little box away.

"Whose boxes can all those be?"

"Don't know," said Jack, sticking his hands deep in his pockets, and effectually subduing any outward exhibition of amusement, although he was as curious as his sister.

Now we must explain a little.

The grandmother with whom Vera had been staying was very rich.

She was also proud and unforgiving, and from the day that her daughter had married a country clergyman instead of a wealthy suitor, Mrs. Devereux had treated her as a stranger, ignored her poverty, and though receiving many dutiful letters, had answered none.

This went on for sixteen years, and then one winter's night, as all the children were assembled round their mother, there came a loud ring that startled the party.

What was their astonishment when the hitherto unknown grandmother, who had descended from a fly at the door, made her appearance in the room.

In quick business terms she told Mrs. Fairbank that she had made this long journey with the object of inviting one of her granddaughters to live with her.

Mrs. Fairbank looked in vain for any signs of yielding towards herself, and in much agitation could only stammer—

"Mamma, we must talk it over. My husband must decide."

"Of course," said the old lady proudly.

"Please consult me at once."

The kindly vicar was brought from his study, and thoughtfully rubbed his head at the proposal which had been made.

"It isn't fair to refuse one of them a chance; but which shall it be?"

"Well?" questioned the old lady, fixing her piercing black eyes on her son-in-law.

"Must see them all, and think well," cautiously said the vicar.

"Humph!" she said; "and they [illegible]

[illegible] to stay [illegible]

Vera [illegible] at home for the holidays—although the grandmother had no [illegible]; and the girls—Marion, Vera, and Lottie—stood wonderingly near to the old straight-backed chair where Mrs. Devereux was seated, but not reclining.

In a moment she singled out Vera, whose kindling dark face was not unlike her own.

"Would you like to live with me, and share the pleasures of Devereux Hall?" she asked.

In excited surprise the others all looked at Vera, as she said eagerly—

"Yes, if mother and father will let me.

"But I should [illegible] like to come [illegible] they will."

"You will lose [illegible] and all of us, [illegible]," suggested [illegible]

Vera [illegible] and all the [illegible] whisper answered.

But it was one that was not lost upon her.

"I think," said the vicar, with a troubled look on his open, kindly face—"I think Vera is very young.

"Would not Marion——"

"No, papa," hastily interrupted Marion; "I will never leave you and mamma.

"Oh, do not let me!"

Mrs. Devereux smiled a hard, cold smile, which had much meaning.

"Does your courage fail you?" she asked Vera pointedly.

"No," said Vera firmly, "I do wish to go."

Mr. Fairbank saw that his wife was watching him anxiously, and so, after a moment's thought, he said—

"Very well, Mrs. Devereux.

"Vera shall have her wish, and visit you for one year."

"Why only for a year?

"Her education will be carried on with every advantage, and I offer her such a home as your wife knows to be worth having.

"I do not doubt it," replied the vicar gravely; "but my child is very young and untrained, and knows little of the step she is taking.

"A year spent with you will enable her to decide what is for her happiness."

"Then have her things packed," cried the old lady.

"Mamma," said Mrs. Fairbank gently, "of course you will sleep here to-night."

"No; I engaged rooms at the hotel near K—— station, and the fly is waiting for us.

"Give the necessary orders, please, for we must leave in half an hour."

Then the little box that Lottie remembered was packed, and with many tears the mother bade her daughter farewell—pausing when the strong clasp of Vera's young arms made her almost think the child had repented.

"Are you certain you like to go, Vera?" she inquired.

"Yes, mamma, quite sure," and the firm look came back, and never failed as all the farewell's were said; and when the fly had driven away, the young children were dismissed to bed, whither they departed with a nightmare sensation that made it impossible for them to realize the events of the evening except as a fairy tale.

And now the year was ended, and Vera was to visit her home for a month, and decide whether or no she would return to Devereux Hall.

"What do you think about it, Richard?" whispered Mrs. Fairbank anxiously, as she stood for a moment alone beside her husband.

"Devereux Hall is a splendid place, wife, and Vera is an honored person there," replied the father, concealing under a light tone a sense of pain.

"The child will go back."

The entrance of the young people caused further remarks to be deferred.

"Do you feel as if the roof would crush you?" impudently inquired Jack, noting Vera's upward glance as they enter the old-fashioned dining-room.

"No," was the short reply.

"Sit by me, Vera dear," said Mrs. Fairbank.

"I want to keep on looking at you."

And the many looks she gave all left her puzzled.

The girl had grown taller and handsomer than when she left home, but the resolute expression of her mouth was more defined, and warred with the softness of her hazel eyes.

All attempts to get news of Devereux Hall were met by short answers.

"Does you love that cross old thing better than mamma?" was an inquiry soon put by little Ethel.

"Hush, baby!" said Mrs. Fairbank quickly; "you must not speak like that."

"But Jack said so," persisted Ethel; "and I wish Vera would tell."

Jack colored as Vera darted a quick glance at him; and then she said gravely to her little sister—

"Jack was wrong, baby."

As days went on, and all the things were unpacked, Marion could not help a sense of inquiry stealing over her at the sight of rich clothing and luxuries supplied lavishly [illegible] to accompanize most carefully.

When Sunday came round, Lottie was [illegible] on lobby ready for church, and [illegible] out of her room.

[illegible] was ran [illegible]

"[illegible] mother!

"[illegible] to [illegible] and [illegible] from [illegible]

Jack [illegible] my dear, and [illegible] said Mrs. Fairbank [illegible] [illegible] on [illegible] with her [illegible]

[illegible]

"[illegible] for [illegible] temptations."

Vera blushed and said—

"Grandmamma wished me to bring all my things home, but of course I would not wear them here."

Mrs. Fairbank leant forward anxiously, and said—

"My child, I fear there is little heart in the great home you have gone to; but re-[illegible]

"[illegible]

"I will [illegible]" Vera hastily replied, and more was said about the matter [illegible]

[illegible]

Jack's return to [illegible] took place a few days before Vera's visit ended, and to the mother's anxious eyes there seemed some restless sadness about the latter.

She began packing two days before she left, and her sisters thought it was a sign of her pleasure at leaving.

Mrs. Devereux sent a maid to accompany her granddaughter on her long journey, and came herself in state to meet her at the end of it.

"Tired of poverty?" she asked, when they were seated in the carriage.

"Not for myself," said Vera.

The old lady looked up strangely, but only said—

"Your mother chose it, and it is fair to me if to say that I warned her."

Vera became very necessary to the old grandmother.

At first there was jealousy on the part of a confidential maid, but Mrs. Devereux dismissed her.

Vera had a talent for music, and for hours her grandmother listened to her.

She could pick up dropped stitches in knitting, answer notes, give orders; and as the second year was drawing to a close Mrs. Devereux seemed to be brooding much over the thought of her granddaughter's coming visit home.

Just as the time was very near an attack of illness seized the old lady, and she would let no one but Vera come near her.

Of course, servants assisted, but every dose of medicine or basin of broth was obliged to be presented by Vera.

Part of the time Mrs. Devereux was insensible, and one winter evening she suddenly spoke to Vera, in a weak, changed voice, but quite conscious—

"What day is this?"

"The 21th of December," answered Vera, gently.

"What! and you were to have gone home ten days ago!

"Why are you here?"

"You have been ill, grandmamma, and you liked me to be near you."

"But you cared to see them all, didn't you?" asked Mrs. Devereux sharply.

"Yes," answered Vera; "but I would not have gone when you needed me."

There was silence for some minutes, then the doctor came, and Vera left the room.

He stayed longer than usual, and Vera wandered about the spacious drawing-room, thinking sadly—

"Is this Christmas-time?"

Next day her grandmother told her to go to church, as she could spare her; and the sight of the many happy faces of children clustered round their mothers made her heart ache.

This would much have surprised Jack, who thought she did not care for anything but luxury.

As she was leaving church, the vicar's wife, a lady of most kindly disposition, stopped her in the porch.

"We have been wishing to see you, for we do not like to think of your eating your Christmas dinner alone. Will you come to us?"

"Thank you," said Vera hesitatingly; "you are very kind, but grandmamma will want me, I think."

And, as Mrs. Drew, like most other neighbors, looked upon Mrs. Devereux as an alarming old lady, no more was said on the subject, and Vera entered the stately carriage and drove off.

What a strange Christmas it seemed to her!

How ridiculous the turkey and plum pudding looked without a single schoolboy joke or merry face to brighten them!

Vera endured being waited upon in solemn silence by the old butler, and watched his evident pleasure at escaping to the servants' regions, where good cheer and the influence of the season kept mirth [illegible].

Then she slowly betook herself with a book to her grandmother's room.

Mrs. Devereux seemed to be dozing, but presently she asked—

"What was the text, Vera?"

"'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,'" said Vera gently, and tears filled her eyes as she silently stood by the bedside.

Mrs. Devereux folded her hands together, and whispered

"I have shut her heart to those words year after year, and yet Thou hast spared me."

After a while she said, in a strangely gentle voice.

"My child, write to your mother, and ask her to forgive me.

"Beg her to come here, with your father and all of them, as soon as they can travel."

"Here, grandmamma!" whispered Vera, eagerly, trembling with tearful excitement.

"Yes, child, quickly! and do not lose a post."

Vera needed no second bidding, but an earnest tear-stained letter was despatched, and those at home knew from it how Vera had hoped by loving attention to win her grandmother's heart, and soften it toward the dear, gentle mother whose pain at her estrangement had been watched with sorrow by the thoughtful girl.

Now God had mercifully blessed her efforts, and the heaven-sent message of peace had melted away the pride of years.

A joyful meeting took [illegible] and Mrs. Fairbank nursed [illegible] back to health.

[illegible] of Devereux parish received [illegible] Mr. Fairbank was [illegible]

The [illegible] to the new parish was a pretty and touching sight.

Mrs. Devereux stood to receive her son-in-law and his family in the gateway of the [illegible] face full of "peace, good will toward men."

[illegible] villagers, who [illegible] to see Mrs. Fairbank restored [illegible] to [illegible] round the gates, and hearty good [illegible] resounded.

When Mrs. Devereux died, she left a handsome fortune to Mrs. Fairbank, and Devereux Hall became Vera's, the grandmother's last will containing these words:—

"So dutiful a child and grandchild may safely be trusted to show justice and generosity to all her kindred."

THE LAST MOMENT.—Observation has shown that in countries boasting of a highly advanced civilization death from pure old age rarely appears; as even in those who live the longest some vulnerable point becomes developed, and disease hastens the termination of life.

But occasionally age alone causes the scene to close.

The nature of the process by which this is achieved is approximately indicated as we advance in life.

The organs become impaired, the sight dim, the hearing dull, the touch obtuse. Indolence becomes natural to the old; with enfeebled strength, bones brittle, ligaments rigid, and muscles weak, activity becomes impossible.

It is cheering to think that death is not to the patient the melancholy quarter of an hour which many imagined, for we generally die by piece-meal, and frightful as this sounds, it is the gentlest form.

The organs degenerate without pain, and dwindling together, preserve their harmony.

De Moivre, the master of calculation, spent (at 80) twenty hours of the twenty-four in sleep, until he fell asleep and woke no more.

The presentiment of death is strong with some.

Ozanam, the mathematician, while in apparent health, rejected pupils, in the belief of his coming death, and he speedily died of an apoplectic stroke.

Many traits are frequent in the dying hour which are far from usual.

Some, when sinking, toss the bed clothes from their chests, which indicates that they feel the covering oppressive.

Others pick the sheets or work them between their fingers, which may be done to excite by friction the benumbed sense of touch.

When the sensibility to outer impressions is lost, the dying often dream of their habitual occupations, and construct an imaginary present from the past.

Doctor Armstrong departed delivering medical precepts.

Napoleon fought some battles over again, and his last words were "Head of the Army."

Lord Tenterden, who passed straight from the judgment seat to his [illegible] himself presiding at a trial and exclaimed with, "Gentlemen of the Jury, you will now consider your verdict."

Thus, each believed himself engaged in the business of life when life itself was departing.

Sometimes a fatal malady appears to stop, and friends congratulate the patient on his recovery.

But it is death come under a mask.

A man having passed from the delirium of a fever to complete tranquility, died while his father was congratulating him on his recovery.

A victim of hydrophobia—disease in which every drop of liquid aggravates the convulsions—was found by Dr. [illegible] quietly quaffing off a jug of porter at a draught. The nurse exclaimed, "What a wonderful cure!" but within an hour the man was dead.

Death by brain fever is frequently pre-[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] dead, whom he [illegible]

[illegible] formerly [illegible]

[illegible] turned [illegible] and the [illegible] deranged.

But this is now known to be due to the agency of corruption.

The development of gas in a corpse, and its mechanical force, frequently mimics the movement of life.

All bodies generate gas in the grave, and it constantly twists the bodies and sometimes bursts the coffin itself.

When the gas explodes with a noise, imagination has converted it into a cry or groan.

The grave has been reopened, and the position of the body and the laceration of the flesh have confirmed the suspicion.

The ceasing to breathe is, however, the invariable and also the unerring sign that [illegible]

[illegible]

A COLD SEEDS A SMALL AFFAIR. Most people neglect it. Who minds it? A Cold may turn to Consumption, and it follows almost certain death. Cure a Cold in time, thus: [illegible] Dr. Jayne's Expectorant, [illegible] will disappear, [illegible] of danger.

Ladies' Department.

FASHION CHAT.

FASHION IN FURS.

FOR young ladies to wear with close fitting jackets, redingotes, etc., the favorite style is the deep round cape that extends over the shoulders half-way to the elbow, but not low enough to conceal the waist line.

A small round muff is worn with them, made up perfectly plain, dispensing even with tassels.

These pelerines are very popular in seal, beaver, and black fox.

Fur lined cloaks are still considered a great luxury, but many ladies object to them as the hair is very apt to come off when worn over a worsted dress, and so prefer their wraps lined with silk or satin, which comes already quilted, and is sold by the yard at very reasonable prices; the cloak is then bordered with bands of fur which are also sold by the yard, and the pointed collar of fur finishes the neck.

Such cloaks are usually in long dolman shape, and are readily cut and fitted by a competent dress-maker, and can be gotten up with moderate expense by making them at home as the fur is easily sewed on, and the collar can be bought at any large fur dealer's unlined, and any ingenious lady can line one with the same quilted silk used with the cloak.

For small children, white coney fur is used, also krimmer, a curled grey fur.

Little coats for girls are made of handsome plain cloth, trimmed with fur, and have a small fur collar and muff to correspond.

Deep plush collars, trimmed with white lace, are novelties for children; little set muffs to correspond are worn with them.

Among some pretty suits just now in process of completion at a fashionable dress-maker's, may be mentioned one in dark green cloth, so much worn last year, and promising to be as popular this season.

The skirt was trimmed with a double box-plaiting eight inches deep, and fastened on two inches from the top of the plaits so they fell over as heading; above this, on the front breadths, were five very deep [illegible]

The apron overskirt had on its lower edge a piece of the cloth cut wide at the centre tapering to each side, and ornamented with perpendicular rows of narrow black braid; full drapery in the back, vest of basque, and sleeves trimmed also with [illegible]

A [illegible] suit was of black silk, and was very tastefully trimmed around the skirt with a box-plaited ruche three quarters of a yard deep, having passementerie leaves arranged on each plait, commencing on the right side near the top and gradually sloping downward as it progressed around the [illegible]

A full apron overskirt, back draperies consisting of two very long breadths sewed together half their length; the left side caught up to form a point on which were grouped some passementerie leaves, the other side arranged in a graceful loop; basque with passementerie vest.

A seal brown cloth polonaise to be worn with a silk skirt was cut very long, and draped quite high away from the sides, and trimmed with silk embroidery of the same shade of brown down the fronts, around collar, and on the close-fitting sleeves.

A Louis Fifteenth Costume.—Coat of pale pink velvet trimmed with silver braid, as are also the flaps of the pockets, sleeves of the velvet with deep cuffs of grey velvet, the shade known as "gris souris," a long waistcoat of pale blue satin embroidered with shaded carnations, the pockets covered with deep flaps and braided with silver.

Knee-breeches of grey velvet, pink silk stockings covering the end of the breeches, low buckle shoes with red heels, a jabot of lace down the waistcoat, the hair powdered, tied at the back with a bow of black velvet, and three-cornered hat of pink velvet trimmed with silver braid, and grey and pink feathers.

A Sweep-Jacket.—Trousers and jacket of black satin, the face blacked, and the implements of his trade along in a basket on his back.

Now to conclude with the young men of the rising generation.

Tom Tucker.—A white cloth vest. Square shirt, trimmed with gold braid and buttons, sleeves with wide cuffs of crimson, with gold braid.

Long vest, of orange silk, embroidered with flowers.

Knee-breeches of crimson plush. Orange silk stockings.

Black shoes and silver buckles. And black velvet hat, with a band of red satin, on it painted, "Little Tom Tucker cried for his supper."

Polichinello, or the French Punch.—The doublet is made with crenelated basques; a huge hump, back and front, ornamented with rosettes of various colors.

The knee-breeches are edged with a frill.

The hat has a pointed crown, pointed sabots, with rosettes.

The costume may be red, white, and blue, trimmed with gold and silver braid.

Fireside Chat.

NOVELTIES IN DECORATION.

PAINTING on every sort of material and every description of article is still the rage—from satin fans, blotters, and envelope cases to rough delf butter crocks, and wooden barrels, and the glazed brown earthenware drainpipes.

Surely may some one exclaim, "What next?"

These pipes are painted with tall, upright flowers, grasses, and leaves, butterflies or birds, and used for holding sticks in a vestibule, or planting a long-stalked fern; they are afterwards varnished.

They stand firmly on the projecting rim or lip, which finishes off one end, and are ornamental as well as original.

Crocks of all shapes and sizes have flowers, especially poppies, chrysanthemums, or variegated nasturtiums, painted on in thick oils as coarsely as possible, in imitation of a French style which is very fashionable just now.

Some workers with deft fingers form raised flowers of gutta percha, glue them on, and then paint.

The gutta percha is to be had in sheets, and is put into boiling water, and then moulded when in a pliant, soft state.

It is the same as that used with such skill by many ladies, some years ago, in imitation of Dresden china.

Wooden barrels are now converted into tasteful resting-places for pet dogs by being cut down to the height of some six or seven inches from the ground, with a space entirely cut away on one side for the entrance, and then painted with a wreath of flowers, and afterwards varnished.

A padded lining of pretty cretonne, and a circular cushion made to fit, completes the whole.

Glass plum jars look well painted in oils, with grass and tufts rising up from the base, and butterflies hovering above. The work is quite easy.

Brushes in a painting room can be kept in them, or dried grass or ferns in a drawing-room.

Fan painting is much done now by young ladies with time at their disposal, principally in oils and in bold designs on [illegible]

The sticks of old summer fans, if of sufficient size, are often stained black and used [illegible]

A yard of satin is the usual size required, the shape being drawn in chalk, but not cut out.

Large marguerites, white and yellow, or navy-blue, ruby, brown, and black satin; poppies straying across, but clustering to one side; and yellow roses, with loose petals, are favorite designs for only ordinary workers; while landscape and figures are aimed at by superior artists, and worked up to great perfection.

Satin at about 50 cents a yard is good enough.

Blotting-book covers take about half a yard.

They are lined with watered paper, and require to be made up by a professional hand.

The ordinary size of a blotting-book is about 10½ in. long and 8½ wide.

These form most acceptable birthday or wedding presents.

Wood-inlaying is an employment which is being taken up by amateurs, both ladies and gentlemen.

Old inlaid furniture is being taken as models, and some of the modern copies are wonderfully good.

Tables, cabinets, the fronts of cottage pianos, &c., are being ornamented, in this style.

The work requires delicate fingering, taste, and patience, as the tiniest scraps of light wood are fitted into dark for the wings of butterflies or petals of flowers, [illegible]

Silhouette designs can be copied for this work.

I have just seen some good inlaid woodwork done by a young girl, copied from designs, in black and white, intended for embroidery, Kensington work, [illegible]

The wood is traced out, cut very thin, fitted in, and glued, but beyond this I know little, except that the effect is very [illegible]

[illegible] attention now, as in a room artistically arranged lamps with shades are placed about small tables and brackets.

The "swiss" lamp shades are fashionable, though more quaint than pretty.

[illegible] brilliant shades possible, [illegible] made by the Diamond [illegible] for brilliancy and durability [illegible]

SOME CARD STORIES.

ON one occasion when Washington Irving, Bancroft, and Everett were chatting over diplomatic reminiscences, the last named told how after he and the Neapolitan ambassador had been presented to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Lord Melbourne intimated that they would be expected to join in a game at whist with the Duchess of Kent.

"I play but a very poor game myself," said Melbourne; "in fact, I scarcely understand it; but the Duchess is very fond of it." "And I," said the Neapolitan to Everett, "am a very bad player; and should I chance to be your Excellency's partner, I invoke your forbearance in advance;" to which the American envoy replied that he knew very little of the game himself. As he put it, three dignified personages, clad in gorgeous attire, were solemnly going to play a game they imperfectly understood, and for which none of them cared in the least.

Upon reaching the Duchess's apartments the ambassadors were formally presented, and then, at her invitation, sat down to play.

As soon as the cards were dealt, a lady-in-waiting placed herself at the back of the Duchess, and the latter said: "Your Excellencies will excuse me if I rely upon the advice of my friend here, for I must confess that I am really a very poor player."

This was almost too much for Everett's gravity; a gravity undisturbed for the rest of the evening, since he found playing whist under such conditions inexpressibly dull work.

Cavour did not find playing an unfamiliar game dull work when he lost a large sum at double dummy whist to a member of a Paris Club. He paid the money with the best grace imaginable, merely remarking that he thought he saw the game, and it might not be such a bad investment after all.

The next night he met the same antagonist, played high, played steadily, played long, and rose from the table a richer man by one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Bold as he could be when the game was worth the candle, Lord Beaconsfield would never have been tempted to risk so much on the cards; for knowing the weakness of his play, he carefully eschewed everything like high stakes.

One evening, at the time when parliament was agitating itself about the Empress-ship of India, Lord Beaconsfield sat down to whist with the Prince of Wales, and asked the latter: "What points, sir?" "Oh, sovereign, if you please," was the answer. Seeing the Premier's look of annoyance, Mrs. Bernal Osborne observed: "I think, sir, the Premier would rather have crown points!" The Prince, taking the joke and the hint, altered the stakes accordingly.

Marlborough was not above playing for smaller stakes, though perhaps the Great Captain did not play high out of fear of his loving Sarah, who had a tongue, and knew how to use it; like the lady whose liege lord contrived that she should not more than suspect the secret of his bad hours; until, coming home at six in the morning tired out with "attending on a sick friend," he dozed at the breakfast table, and solemnly passing the bread, said: "Cut!" "That's your sick friend, is it?" exclaimed the wife; and what followed may be imagined.

A card-loving wife can put aside her scruples on occasion. Soon after the close of the Secession War, General Forrest and his wife stopped at an hotel in Memphis, and upon examining their purses, found the aggregate of their wealth amounted to seven dollars and thirty cents.

The General being due that evening at a house where poker was sure to be played, proposed that he should tempt fortune to the full extent of his means, and asked his wife to pray for his success. She would not promise; but he felt she was for him, and knew how it would be. Let him tell the rest himself.

"They had tables—one was a quarter-dollar table, one a half, and one a dollar and a half. I wanted to make my seven dollars last as long as I could make it, so I sat down to the quarter table. By dinner time I had won enough to do better; and after we had eaten, sat down to the dollar-and-a-half table. Sometimes I won, and then again I lost, until nigh upon midnight, when I had better luck. I knew Mary was sitting up anxious, and it made me cool. I set my hat on the floor, and every time I won, I'd drop the money in the hat. I sat there until day broke, and then I [illegible] hat up in both hands, smashed it on my head, and went home. When I got to my room, there sat Mary in her gown. She seemed tired and anxious, and though she looked mighty hard at me, she didn't say a word. I walked right up to her, and emptied my hat right into the lap of her gown, and then we sat down and counted it. Just fifteen hundred dollars, and that gave me a start."

Mr. Clay's devotion to cards did not disturb his wife's equanimity in the least. Asked by a Northern belle if it did not distress her that her husband should gamble, the candid old lady replied; "Not at all, my dear; he must always wins."

The wife of Bishop Beadon loved whist so well, that when the prelate told one of his clergy if he was able to sit up half the night playing whist at the Bath Rooms, he must be well enough to do duty at home, the invalided one silenced him with:

"My lord, Mrs. Beadon would tell you that late whist acts as a tonic or restorative to dyspeptic people with weak nerves." The bishop's better-half would have sympathized with Goldsmith's old lady, who, lying sick unto death, played cards with the curate to pass the time away, and after winning all his money, had just proposed to play for her funeral charges, when she expired.

There have been stranger stakes still. In 1735, when Henry and James Trotter sat down at the "Salmon Inn," Chester-le-Street, to play a game of cards against Robert Thoms and Thomas Ellison, the latter pair staking five shillings, and the former a child, the son of a Mr. and Mrs. Leesh, who gave up their boy to the winners.

A traveler in New Zealand, spending a night in a squatter's hut, was invited to cut in for a rubber of whist. As he took his seat, he inquired:

"What points?"

His partner responded in a tone significant of surprise at such a question:

"Why, the usual game, of course—sheep points, and a bullock on the rubber."

Unless Espartero and his foe Marota are much belied, more momentous issues were decided by the cards in a lone farmhouse at Borgara, where they privately met to arrange a truce between their respective [illegible]

No sooner did Espartero enter the room, than the Carlist chief challenged him to a game of tresillo, a challenge the Christino commander accepted with alacrity. Espartero first won all Marota's money, then his own conditions for the truce, article by article, and finally the entire submission of the Carlist army.

Within twenty-four hours, Marota had paid his debt, and the first Carlist war was at an end.

A Mr. Purdy, as the end of his bachelorhood drew nigh, let his old cronies know it was his intention to forswear card-playing after perpetrating matrimony. They thereupon put their heads together, and a day or two after the wedding, invited him to a little dinner at Delmonico's, at which he was to receive a three hundred dollar [illegible]

Dinner done, and the presentation made, the party made themselves and their guest merry over some excellent wine, and when they thought the time but come, proposed a game of poker; and after a little hesitation, Purdy gave in, "just for this once." His host had fixed things nicely, and calculated upon winning the price of their wedding gift, the dinner, and the wine. The game went on till long after daylight appeared, but by that time the intended victim had cleaned every one of them out, besides retaining lawful possession of the silver service.

Even the sharpest of sharpers may meet more than his match.

Robert Houdin happening to saunter into a continental casino where a Greek was reaping a rare harvest at écarte, looked on quietly until a seat was vacant, and then dropped into it.

The Greek, dealing dexterously, turned a king from the bottom of the pack. When the deal came to Robert Houdin, he observed:

"When I turn kings from the bottom of the pack, I always do it with one hand instead of two; it is quite as easy, and much more elegant. See! here comes his majesty of diamonds;" and up came the card.

The cheat stared at the conjurer for a moment, and then rushed from the place, without waiting to possess himself of his hat, coat, or stakes.

Feathers, ribbons, velvet can all be colored to match that new hat by using the Diamond Dyes. Druggists sell any color for 10 cts.

BETTER THAN GOLD.

Better than grandeur, better than gold,
Than rank or titles a thousand fold,
Is a healthy body and a mind at ease,
And simple pleasures that always please;
A heart that can feel for another's woe,
And share its joys with a genial glow,
With sympathies large enough to enfold
All men as brothers, is better than gold.

Better than gold is a conscience clear,
Though toiling for bread in an humble sphere
Doubly blessed with content and health,
Untried by the lust or cares of wealth;
Lowly living and lofty thought
Adorn and ennoble a poor man's cot,
For mind and morals in nature's plan
Are the genuine tests of a gentleman.

Better than gold is the sweet repose
Of the sons of toil when their labors close;
Better than gold is the poor man's sleep,
And the balm that drops on his slumbers deep
Brings sleepy draughts to the downy bed
Where luxury pillows its aching head,
The toiler simple opiate deems
A shorter road to the land of dreams.

Better than gold is a thinking mind,
That in the realm of books can find
A treasurer surpassing Australian ore,
And living with the great and good of yore,
The sage's lore and the poet's lay,
The glories of empire pass away;
The world's great dream will thus unfold
And yield a pleasure better than gold.

Better than gold is a peaceful home,
When all the fireside characters come,
The shrine of love, the heaven of life,
Hallowed by mother, sister, or wife,
However humble the home may be,
Or tried with sorrow by Heaven's decree,
The blessings that were never bought nor sold,
And centre there, are better than gold.

REV. A. J. RYAN.

SAYINGS OF GREAT PEOPLE.

GEORGE III.'S sayings are, like his own image stamped on copper—poor in expression, but very strongly stamped. It was the same with Madame de Pompadour's celebrated expression of recklessness: "After us, the deluge," a saying which has become part of history, partly from its truth, partly from its vivid expression of the selfishness and recklessness which made it historical. And it is this quality of personal expressiveness which, when the character so stamped is not poor, but has anything magnificent or noble in it, that makes a great saying take rank with a great deed. Louis XIV.'s declaration on his death-bed to Madame de Maintenon, "I imagined it more difficult to die," as though his departure at least must have involved a convulsion of nature; and Pitt's grand farewell to power, when he returned, dying, from Bath, "Fold up the map of Europe," are excellent specimens of sayings which, though containing no thought at all—nothing but a great consciousness of power, yet impress us more than the most vivid wisdom or the most poignant wit. This is why dignity tells for so much in a saying of this kind—for so much more, indeed, than even truth.

Burke's grand sentence on the hustings, when referring to the death of another candidate, "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" makes an even greater impression on the imagination than the other sentence, "I do not know how to draw up an indictment against a whole people," not because it embodies half the political wisdom of the second, but because it recalls Burke and his soaring imagination more impressively to the mind. Even Lord Chesterfield, with all his thinness and superficiality makes his mark upon us as soon as he begins to delineate himself. "There is a certain dignity to be kept up in pleasures, as well as in business," and "Knowledge may give weight, but accomplishments give lustre, and many more people see than weigh," paint so exactly a man thoughtfully and consistently anxious about appearances, that they impress us almost as much as one of Dr. Johnson's vivid self-portraitures of a much nobler kind. Indeed they impress us not only almost as much, but for nearly the same reason, that by imaging the man who lived in appearances, they throw up in strong relief on our minds the recollection of men to whom mere appearances were naught.

Sayings, however excellent, which do not convey in them any self-portraiture are seldom vividly associated with their true authors. How many of our readers will remember who it was that said, "Nothing is certain but death and taxes;" or, "We must all hang together, or else we shall all hang separately," or even, "It is better to wear out than rust out," which last does represent the energy of a certain kind of temperament, but energy so common that it marks rather a class than an individual. Benjamin Franklin said the two first sayings, and Bishop Cumberland the last, but we should be surprised to find anyone in a company of literary men who could have pronounced on the spot to whom any one of the three was to be attributed. On the other hand, we seldom misappropriate sayings containing much less that it is worth while to remember, if only vividly they portray a memorable figure,—like Frederick the Great's indignant, "Do you fellows want to live forever?" when his soldiers showed some disinclination to being shot down; or Gambetta's peremptory, "Make make them submit, or submit yourselves," of Marshal MacMahon's "Government of Combat."

Thus, the most impressive of all sayings are probably those of great rulers who contrived to embody the profound confidence they felt that a life of command was before them, in a few weighty words. Julius Cæsar's "Veni, vidi, vici," and his question to the skipper who feared for the loss of his boat, "What dost thou fear, when Cæsar is on board?" or his disdainful apology for an unjust divorce, "Cæsar's wife ought to be free even from suspicion," are likely to be in everyone's mouth as long as the world lasts. And so, perhaps, is Napoleon's, "I succeeded not Louis XIV., but Charlemagne," and the same great man's remark, "Imagination rules the world," and, "I ought to have died at Waterloo."

Grains of Gold.

A man's life is an appendix to his heart.

Sin is essentially a departure from God.

Simplicity is of all things the hardest to be copied.

Reckon a matter of trial to be among thy gains.

The souls of some men are in their clothes.

Time is the old justice who tries all offenders.

Tears may soothe the wounds they cannot heal.

Men must be taught as though you taught them not.

A wise man is never less alone than when he is alone.

They that stand high have many blasts to shake them.

One always has time enough if one will apply it well.

The truly sublime is always easy and always natural.

Men cannot live exclusively by intelligence and self-love.

Flee sloth, for indolence of the soul is the decay of the body.

A crowd always thinks with its sympathy, never with its reason.

It is a proof of boorishness to confess a favor with a bad grace.

Virtue often trips and falls on the sharp-edged rock of poverty.

An effort made for the happiness of others lifts us above ourselves.

The most unhappy of all men is he who believes himself to be so.

Men possessing small souls are generally the authors of great evils.

Every noble crown is, and on earth ever will be, a crown of thorns.

A virtue of paganism is strength, a virtue of Christianity is obedience.

When a man resists sin on human motives only, he won't hold out long.

There would not be so many open mouths if there were not so many open ears.

There are moments when petty slights are harder to bear than a serious injury.

What renders the vanity of others unbearable to us is the wound it inflicts on ours.

It is not from nature, but from education and habits, that wants are chiefly derived.

Be not familiar with the idea of wrong, for sin in fancy mothers many an evil fact.

Truth is the shortest and nearest way to our end, carrying us thither on a straight line.

Those that dare lose a day are dangerously prodigal; those who dare misspend it, desperate.

Success serves men as a pedestal; it makes them look larger if reflection doth not measure them.

Talents are best nurtured in solitude, but character is best formed in the storm-billows of the world.

An evil mind will be sure to put the worst construction on another's actions; who can stand before envy?

Upon the margin of celestial streams alone grow those simple flowers which are capable of curing the heart-ache.

A worldly life has as much restriction in different ways as a good life, without the final remuneration that a good life has.

Femininities.

Trust not too much to an enchanting face.

There are 94 servants in Queen Victoria's household.

Never buy a handkerchief or choose a wife by candle light.

Salt fish are quickest and best freshened by soaking in sour milk.

Never ask a woman her age—that is, not that woman. Ask some other woman.

It is bad taste for a girl in her teens to wear a dress that would become a woman of twenty-five.

Lace ruches, high in the throat, remain the favorite lingerie of ladies with long, slender necks.

Jerrold says that young boys who marry old maids, "gather in the spring of life the golden fruits of autumn."

According to the Science Monthly, a solution of common cooking or bi-carbonate of soda, is a good remedy for burns.

Pretty girls are like confectionery in more ways than one. They are sweet, they are expensive, and they are conducive to heartburn.

It is said that there are employed in one shoe manufactory in Lynn, Mass., 20 females, all divorced wives and hailing from Maine.

Handsome tidies are placed on satin-covered sofas, not so much as a guarantee of good faith as to cover up the spot that is worn through.

A New Yorker, who has traveled all over Turkey, says no Turk ever cares two cents for his wife until he finds out that some other fellow cares three.

The women of Rome have complexions like white wax, which are lovely by gaslight, but unhealthy-looking by day. See one Roman face, and you see them all.

Young ladies who are pining to paint "flower pieces," are reminded that the finer piece that is most attractive to the marrying man is a batch of good bread.

People need not wonder at the scarcity of good servant girls. If a girl is good for anything, some fellow is going to find it out and marry her; and don't forget it.

Before Bings' wife died he insisted that she make her will. He expects to be re-united to her in the other world, and thought it would be pleasanter if she left her will in this.

Some of the fashionable ladies of the Spanish town of Ferrol have made a solemn agreement to make less display in their toilettes, the extravagance of which is ruining their husbands and fathers.

An elderly English lady of fashion, needing a page, advertised: "Youth wanted." Next day there came to her a bottle of wrinkle-shifter and skin-tightener, a pot of Fairy Bloom, a set of false teeth, and a wig.

When the rich woman can show to the world only a life of fashion and idleness, she is deserving of open censure and disgrace, so long as there are hungry bodies, minds or souls, crying for some of her abundance.

Miss Malvina Rumley had just started out with her beau for a walk, when her little brother Billy called to her from the fence: "I say, Malviny, don't you bring that feller back to tea with you. Ma says there ain't more'n enough biscuit to go round as it is."

A late fancy in decorating sleeves places one bow of ribbon just below the elbow, and another on the upper arm about two and a half inches below the shoulder armhole seam. This device breaks the long trying line of a tight sleeve between the armhole and the elbow.

It has long been claimed that using coffee and tea caused nervousness, and now along comes a doctor and denies the statement entirely. The real cause of the great nervousness among married men is the expectation of finding their wives awake when they come home late.

A young man of this city, who has been to the Hub, tells us that the intellectuality of the Boston girl begins at the breakfast table and lasts until the old folks go to bed. After that, if the right fellow is in the parlor, and the light is turned low, she "acts like any other girl."

A lady who had company to tea, reproved her little son several times—speaking, however, very gently. At last, out of patience with him, she said sharply: "Johnny, if you don't keep still I'll send you away from the table." Looking at her in surprise, he said: "Didn't you forget to use your company voice then, ma?"

The following explains the difference between luck and chance: You take a girl out to the theatre and discover that you haven't a cent in your pocket. You are, of course, compelled to invite her to an oyster saloon after the performance. She refuses for some reason; that's luck. But the chances are a million to one that she will accept.

A Western philosopher says: When a 'oman finds out dat her best frien' ain't got a good character, she tosses her head and says that she never did like her, no how, but when a man learns dat his best frien' has been sent to the penitentiary, he says: "Poo' feller, I always did like him." Dat is de difference betwixt de friendship ob a man and a woman.

In a town not many miles from Boston, a man stepped into a neighbor's house, where he saw the head of the family lying upon his back on the floor, and his wife standing over him, as he thought, with a threatening air. He was about to withdraw, when the prostrate man shouted, "Come along in, Steve; the old woman is only chalking me out a pair of pants."

"When," asked the superintendent, fixing his eye on the teacher of the young ladies' Bible class, "when does man most keenly, fully and conscientiously recognize and realize his own utter nothingness?" And the young man, who had led himself to the altar only two short weeks before, blushed painfully and said, with faltering voice, "When he's being married."

News Notes.

The monks and nuns in Italy number nearly 32,000.

Many Catholic priests in Italy receive only $80 a year.

The Irish compose over one-twelfth of the British army.

The poet Whittier thinks a boiled dinner a detestable dish.

Governor Cleveland, of New York, sold papers when a boy.

Strawberries are selling for $10 a quart; peaches for $3 each.

On an average in Switzerland not more than one in ten goes to church.

The London World doubts that Italian opera brings any profit in London.

The Chinese pay $154,752,000 a year to quiet the spirits of their ancestors.

English journalists have invented a new word for short editorials—leaderette.

A Troy Miss was so flustered by a beau's first evening that she actually lit the gas with a $5 bill.

The census of 1881 gives London a population of of 3,814,571, making it the largest city in the world.

The American Bible Society is now making its fourth distribution of Bibles in the United States.

New York stands first on the list of cities using the telephone, Chicago next, and Paris comes in third.

Duncan Ford, a Virginian, died last week at the accurately-ascertained age of one hundred and twenty years.

An association of gentlemen has been formed in Chicago, who refuse to pay in cars if compelled to stand.

American magazines have a large circulation in England, and have brought down the price of English monthlies.

The Shah of Persia pays his barber $5,000 a year. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to state that the tonsorial artist is a mute.

Australia is trying to get rid of the English sparrow by the bounty process, and heads and eggs of the bird come in rapidly.

In the year 1882 there were 284 steamships and large river steamboats lost; and of this number 31 were sunk by collision.

A Russian nobleman is said to be a driver of the small-pox wagon that plies between various parts of Chicago and the pest-house.

An elaborate crematory is to be built in New York. The advocates of this mode of disposing of the bodies of dead friends are increasing.

At the instance of the Berlin Anti-Cruelty Society, all public performances of tamers of lions and other dangerous beasts will be henceforth prohibited.

The banjo is not to become fashionable among the aristocratic classes of England without a protest. One critic begs that the mandolin be substituted.

Saxony has acquired the unenviable reputation of being the "Chimborazo of suicide." More persons kill themselves there than in any other country in Europe.

Competent judges estimate that the Franco-German war cost France two provinces, a million of lives, and $5,000,000,000. It added $2,000,000,000 to the debt.

Whittier, the poet, is bothered very much by autograph-hunters. He tells a reporter that during 1882 he received between 2,000 and 3,000 letters asking for his autograph.

Three thousand London policemen followed the remains of one of their number to the grave recently. The force now consists of 12,000 men, not counting special officers.

An octogenarian at Simmons' Gap, Ga., is living with his ninth wife. He is the father of 53 children, and at a recent family gathering over 300 of his descendants were present.

For three days recently the fog was so thick in London that gas-lights fifty feet apart could not be seen from the window at noonday, and a stop was put to nearly all business.

A New York photographer says that women have no more vanity than men. They all want to look their best—either women or men—when they are having their pictures taken.

The Legislature in Nebraska is seriously considering a proposition to abolish the grand jury system from that State, on the ground that its effects are more pernicious than beneficial to the administration of law.

Going to a New Orleans funeral, a snuff-taker exposed his snuff to the breeze, which blew it into the eyes of a horse attached to a carriage behind. The animal became uncontrollable, and smashed the carriage against a lamp-post.

A Kentucky cow broke into a cornfield and gorged herself so that she was about to die. A surgeon made an incision in her side and removed over six bushels of corn, corn-stalks and grass. The opening soon healed up, and the cow is now doing well.

Long Hide, an Indian chief, of Lower California, grew weary of life after living for 150 years. He planted a stout stick in the middle of a brush fire, and held on to the pole until life was extinct, although several of his people tried to rescue him.

A torpid liver, a stomach out of order, digestive apparatus weak, and the brain, in consequence of these disorders, over-sensitive to exertion or to any unusual circumstance, and the formula for a "crank" is complete. Ayer's Pills will rouse up the liver, regulate the functions of the stomach and bowels, the tired brain will be relieved, and the head resume its wonted level.

Two Weddings.

BY HENRY FRITH.

MRS. LOUISE LOFTON, the rich widow owning the handsome estate of Crowood, had determined that her niece Lily, never should marry.

Her husband had not been the tenderest imaginable, and Lily's father was a spendthrift, who had left her penniless.

Mrs. Lofton had finally decided against men as a class.

She had wished for a son, but had none—Lily was all in all to her.

But she vowed that the girl should never marry.

Money, liberty, leisure and pleasure she should have without stint, but she should not marry.

It seemed a pity.

There was something so soft in the poor girl's loveliness,so delicious in her smile, it seemed a pity to have all the sweetness of such a tender nature appropriated by her aunt, who, if the truth must be told, was a trifle acid and acrimonious.

People said Lily was afraid of her, but I do not think that was true.

She was a sharp disciplinarian, but she delighted in the girl's beauty and affection, and never meant to grieve her tender heart.

That she was kind in forbidding her a husband she certainly believed.

She had married, so had Lily's mother, and they both had been very unhappy; in preventing her from marrying she was saving her much sorrow.

"For there is not a man in the world I would trust with Lily," she was wont to say.

She did not keep the girl out of society, but she kept her so close at her side that he must be a bold man indeed who could pass the rampart of her cold stare and reach Lily's smile.

For I cannot say, and you would not believe me if I did, that so sweet a girl was averse to manly devotion.

Nor, since she had reached her twentieth year, was it likely that she had beheld admiring eyes, afar off, and been without her preferences.

She stood by a window of the breakfast-room, one morning, awaiting her aunt's appearance at breakfast.

Early rising was one of Mrs. Louise's idiosyncracies, and breakfast was served at seven, summer and winter.

It was now half-past six, and in the clear morning light Lily's complexion was as pure and as fresh as if she had not sung until twelve o'clock at Madame Hyacinth's *musicale* the night before.

Her eyes, too, were as bright as dew-wet flowers, though a little absent in expression.

She was looking at the great clumps of golden lilies outside the window, without seeing them, yet there was no manner of doubt about Lily using her eyes when in company.

Another pair—brown, tender and merry—had met hers a few evenings before, the owner it seemed to her, she would give all the world to meet them.

He was a stranger—Mr. Jack Farlie.

She only knew the name, and she was sure that her aunt had not noticed him at all in the crowd.

But he had sung with such a delicious baritone voice, and restored her handkerchief with a smile which had thrilled to her finger-tips.

Then later, when she sat by the window for air, half enveloped by her aunt's fichus, as they had criticised the company standing with Mrs. Le Grande, Lily heard the splendid baritone, just outside the big red curtain, and knew that Mr. Farlie was upon the piazza, talking with Charlie Cole, the son of their family physician.

"Not marry! A girl with such eyes and a smile like that? Your Mrs. Lofton must be bereft of her reason! Well, since I have found somebody who can give me an introduction—come!"

"I don't see Miss Lily now," said young Cole, sweeping the curtain aside and completely hiding Lily behind it, as he walked across the room; "and I tell you it is of no use, Farlie. She's a mighty nice girl, but her aunt would never invite you up to her house—would literally turn you out of the door, if you went there and offered your heart, hand and fortune to her niece. She has determined that Lily shall never marry."

There was a moment's silence, as if the stranger was nonplussed.

"Too bad, Jack, to discourage you so!" Charley said sympathetically; "but I can't help it."

"Discouraged? Not in the least," was the cheerful reply. "Faint heart never won fair lady."

"Come, Lily—come!" you know I don't allow late hours," was the next Lily heard; and in a moment she was swept from the room, enveloped in her wrappings, and placed in her carriage.

But as the coachman slammed the door, she leaned forward to inhale the fragrance of a cigar, and to catch a last glimpse of Mr. Jack Farlie, graceful and debonair, in the starlight.

If the hot color shot into her fair cheeks there was no one to see them in the dark.

Aunt Louise had caught cold, and complained of the crowd and heat of the room; she scolded in one corner, and Lily dreamed in the other.

But time had passed, and Lily, looking at the lonely, dew-wet garden that morning, experienced the pangs of disillusion.

She had never had a lover, and she never would.

Aunt Louise would never allow it, and she would be a match for the boldest and most determined.

The curtain of silk and lace to the luxurious little breakfast-room waved in the breeze; the terraces, fountains and trees of Crowood lay in bright elegance before her; but Lily thought everything so tame and dull that morning, as she turned disconsolately to meet her aunt as she came in at the door.

"My dear Lily," she cried, displaying an open letter in her hand, "read this!"

Lily opened the sheet and carefully perused it—

"DEAR MRS. LOFTON (since I may no longer call you Louise), I have a great favor to ask of you. By the memory of our happy youth when we were care free and devoted to each other—in short, lovers—I beg you to grant it.

"My family has been lately broken up (my wife is long since deceased) by the marriage of my sister, I am much troubled about my children. The girls will be sent to boarding school, but my son is in delicate health, and thinks he would prefer to spend his summer vacation in the country.

"Couldn't you kindly receive him into your family for a few weeks? It would be a great favor to me, as I should be assured he was happy, and under the best of influences. Excuse the haste of this letter, and kindly write me at once.

Very truly yours,
"RICHARD FARLIE."

"Richard Farlie! He was the man I ought to have married Lily—a good man, if there ever was a good man in the world! I was very young, and did not know my own mind. He lives in the city now and I have not seen him this twenty years. But to think of this boy—why, of course I can't take him! Next to men, I hate boys you know."

Lily sipped her chocolate indifferently.

"He'd racket around, wear horrid boots and bring in mud, of course; boys always do; said Mrs. Louise, breaking her egg shell. "But Richard, I suppose he loves his son—is anxious about him. What would you do, Lily?"

"If he is a gentleman's son, I should think he'd keep clean, answered Lily absently—for she was hardly thinking about the boy at all, and had only caught part of her aunt's remarks.

"Perhaps he is a nice little fellow, and I might like to have a child in the house if he wasn't more than seven or eight. I'll think about it."

Mrs. Louise finally accepted, and despatched a note to that effect.

The next morning about ten o'clock, a carriage rolled up the drive, and the driver was heard unloading a trunk on the piazza.

"That boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Louise, looking startled—for she was falling into a nap in a reclining chair. "Well, he'll soon be back at school—that's one comfort," and she rose to receive him.

Lily, her lap full of pink and blue wools, did not rise.

The door swung open; and a handsome young gentleman of five and twenty advanced easily, with a genial air.

"I am Jack Farlie," he said, giving Mrs. Louise his hand. "You are very kind to oblige my father and receive me into your pleasant home."

Mrs. Louise turned all colors, but did not refuse to shake hands.

"The city is so hot this time of year, and I have been pressed with work until I am rather fagged out."

"Your father—is—is still a merchant?" stammered Mrs. Louise.

"Yes."

"I—I—thought—he spoke of your vacation; that you were at school?"

"At school?"

"Well, it was my mistake, of course," stammered Mrs. Louise. "Never mind. How is your father?"

It was impossible not to be cordial to such an exceedingly frank and pleasant young gentleman, especially as he seemed not in the least attracted by Lily, though she started and blushed every time he looked towards her, and was strangely overwhelmed with confusion.

Mrs. Louise decided, after the first two or three days, that she need not fear Jack Farlie falling in love with her niece; and Jack—well, with a little skill in contriving interviews with Lily, he found Crowood quite as pleasant as he had anticipated.

In a short time he became prime favorite with Mrs. Louise.

He was so frank, so genial, so obliging, and looked so like his father—when he was young.

Six weeks passed with great happiness to all parties.

On the first of September Mrs. Louise arranged a garden *fete*, and invited Mr. Richard Farlie.

He too, was frank, genial and a little more florid than his son, and was very fatherly in his manner to Lily.

"Jack talks of marrying," he said, seating himself upon a rustic seat between them—a remark that made Lily turn pink and her aunt white.

"Marrying!" the latter exclaimed in dismay.

"Yes; he is like all other young men, I suppose, replied Mr. Farlie, Sr.

But Mrs. Louise was seriously discomposed.

She lost her look of pleasure; for some anxiety prayed on her mind.

A few days later she took Jack Farlie to task.

"To think of you being already engaged!" she said, "I had hoped that if you wanted to marry, that Lily—well, that Lily might please you."

"I am not engaged; and Lily does please me, dear Mrs. Lofton. I think, with you, that she is the sweetest girl in the world, and if you would trust me with her I will make her a good husband."

She sent him to talk to Lily.

And then she fell to crying, to think how lonely she would be.

Just then the servant allowed in Mr. Farlie, Sr.

"Dear Louise, these young people have stolen a march on us! Let us steal a march on them. How surprised they would be if we should marry!"

It really seemed the thing to do, though Mr. Richard had not thought of such a thing when he received Jack's confidence, and kindly helped him to invade the stronghold of Crowood.

There were two weddings, both equally happy.

THE WATER-CLOCK.—The water-clock was a curious contrivance, and a very uncertain one, and was the first of which we have any record of measuring time by mechanical means. Some writers think that it was in use in China, Chaldea, and Egypt before the general knowledge of the sun-dial; but, whether that was the case or not, it was very ingenious in its way. It consisted of a hollow ball, flattened a little at the top to the shape of a poppy-head, whence it derived its Greek name. There was an opening at the top where the water was poured in, and this was kept closed with a stopper, so that the water was not liable to be spilled over, and various small holes on the opposite side allowed it to trickle out, as if through a filter. Time was computed by the gradual diminution of the water in the vessel. No reliance however could be placed upon the clock, for the flow of the water fluctuated under climatic and atmospheric conditions, and the Greeks and Romans can hardly have been "punctual to the minute" if they relied upon the clepsydra, as the water clock was called. It seems likely that these mechanical clocks were in use in the houses or courts of the houses, while in all public places, squares, or on monumental buildings sun-dials were universally used. In luxurious families a slave was kept on purpose to watch the sun-dial and water-clock and to report the time. A wonderful water-clock is on record some centuries later, when Haroun Al Raschid sent Charlemagne a striking-clock regulated by water, in which, as twelve hours were completed, twelve doors on the face or dial opened and twelve men on horseback rode out and returned, closing the doors behind them.

INSECTS ON ORANGES.—When a dish of oranges is seen on the table for dessert, the fact is hardly realized that in all probability their surface is the habitat of an insect of the Coccus family. This tiny creature is found on the orange skin in every stage of transformation, from the egg to the perfect insect, during the winter months, instead of remaining dormant in the cold weather, as is the case with most of the insect tribe. It would hardly be possible to find a St. Michael's or Tangerine orange that had not hundreds of these little creatures in various stages of development on their surface. Lemons, too, are frequently covered. Upon inspection, the skin of an orange will be found to be dotted over with brownish scarlet spots of various sizes. These specks can be easily removed by a needle; and when placed under a microscope, an interesting scene is presented, consisting of a large number of eggs, which are oval white bodies, standing on end, like little bags of flour, some of the inhabitants of which may very probably be seen in process of emerging from the opened end of the egg. The female insect upon leaving the egg has six legs, two long hair-like appendages, and no wings; it thrusts a sucker into the orange in order to obtain nourishment, and never moves again, passing through the various stages of development until it lays its eggs and dies. In the case of the male insect, the chrysalis after a short period opens and the insect flies off. The male is supplied with wings twice the length of its body, and each of the legs has a hook-like projection. It has four eyes and two antennæ, and is so tiny that it cannot be seen when flying.

KEEP IT TO YOURSELF.—You have trouble—your feelings are injured, your husband is unkind, your wife frets, your home is not pleasant, your friends do not treat you fairly, and things in general move unpleasantly. Well, what of it? Keep it to yourself. A smouldering fire can be found and extinguished; but when the coals are scattered who can pick them up? Bury your sorrow. The place for sad and disgusting things is under the ground. A cut is not benefited by pulling off the plaster and exposing it under somebody's eye. Tie it up and let it alone. It will get well sooner than you can cure it. Charity covereth a multitude of sins. Things thus covered are often covered with a scar, but once published and confided to meddling friends, there is no end to the trouble they may cause. Keep it to yourself. Troubles are transient and when a sorrow is healed and passed, what a comfort it is to say: "No one ever knew it until the trouble was all over."

M. S.

BAY CITY, MICH., Feb. 3, 1880.

I think it my duty to send you a recommend for the benefit of any person wishing to know whether Hop Bitters are good or not. I know they are good for general debility and indigestion; strengthen the nervous system and make new life. I recommend my patients to use them.

DR. A. PRATT.

"Presenting the Bride" Heard From

Stevensburg, Mich., Jan. 6, '83.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Your magnificent premium picture, "Presenting the Bride," at hand, and think it very beautiful. I am greatly pleased with it, and thank you very much for such a beautiful present. I have shown it to quite a number of people, and they all say it is the prettiest and richest premium they have ever had the pleasure of beholding. Will do all that lies in my power to increase your subscription list.

H. R.

Delevan, Minn., Dec. 29, '82.

Editor Post—I received the picture, "Presenting the Bride," in due time, and all who have seen it are delighted with it. You may look for some subscribers from me shortly, as many of my friends expressed a desire to subscribe, and how could they feel otherwise, with such a paper, and such a premium!

J. M. A.

Brownwood, Tex., Jan. 3, '83.

Editor Post—Your premium, "Presenting the Bride," came to hand all right. I cannot find language to express my thanks to you for the beautiful premium. I have received many premiums, but yours leads them all. Will send some subscriptions soon.

M. E. N.

McArthur, O., Jan. 1, '83.

Editor Post—Your premium, "Presenting the Bride," is indeed a beautiful gift of art, and cannot fail to please the most fastidious. Many thanks.

A. M. W.

Shenandoah, Ia., Dec 29, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Your premium picture, "Presenting the Bride," was duly received, and am more than pleased with it. It is by far the handsomest picture I ever saw.

J. C. W.

Old Fort, N. C., Jan. 6, '83.

Editor Post—The picture premium, "Presenting the Bride," received. It is beautiful, and I am very much pleased with it. All who have seen the picture think it is just superb. Expect to get you numerous subscribers in a few days.

M. J. B.

Malden, Mass., Jan. 7, '83.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—The picture, "Presenting the Bride," has come to hand, and in good condition. I am much pleased with it, indeed. I have shown it to some of my neighbors, and they all unite with me in voting it beautiful. Will send you some subscribers soon.

M. L. H.

Charleston, S. C., Jan. 1, 83.

Editor Post—Have received my picture, "Presenting the Bride," and was surprised at its marvelous beauty. I am well pleased with it. I have shown it to several of my friends, and all say it is the handsomest and most valuable premium they ever saw.

K. H. S.

Good Luck, Ark., Dec. 26, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—My beautiful premium Photo-Oleograph, "Presenting the Bride," came duly to hand, and it is even better than you claimed it to be. I will see what I can do for you in the way of new subscribers.

M. R. W.

Seymour, Ct., Dec. 29, '82.

Editor Post—I have received premium, "Presenting the Bride." It far surpasses my most sanguine expectations—perfectly lovely! Will get some subscribers for you.

A. A. C.

Bagdad, Ky., Dec. 24, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—I received the beautiful picture, "Presenting the Bride," in due time, and am very much pleased with it. It is far ahead of my most sanguine expectations. Shall see what I can do for you in the way of subscribers.

M. E. R.

Washington, D. C., Dec. 28, '82.

Editor Post—"Presenting the Bride" was delivered to me yesterday, and am highly pleased with it. We consider it a gem. Have given it a conspicuous place in our gallery for the inspection of our friends.

D. T.

Grenada, Miss., Dec. 25, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Paper and premium received. THE POST is a splendid literary journal. And the picture is very handsome. Am greatly pleased with it. Everyone who has seen the picture considers it grand.

V. I. F.

Jamesport, Mo., Dec. 28, '82.

Editor Post—I received my premium for The Post, for which accept thanks. It is the most beautiful premium I ever saw.

A. D.

Flemington, Ky., Dec. 29, '82.

Editor Post—I received your premium picture yesterday all sound, and am very much pleased with it. It is far ahead of the premiums usually offered by newspapers, and certainly ought to bring you many subscribers. Am quite proud of it.

M. I. V.

Olott, Tenn., Dec. 30, '82.

Editor Post—I received my Photo-Oleograph, "Presenting the Bride," and think it very beautiful. Had it framed and hung up two hours after its arrival. It is admired by everybody.

W. A. K.

Oakley, Idaho, Dec. 27, '82.

Editor Post—I received my premium last night, and think it very beautiful. I will with pleasure aid you in raising your subscription list, and I think I can get a great many subscribers for you.

J. M. S.

Bangor, Mich., Dec. 30, '82.

Editor Post—The premium picture, "Presenting the Bride" received, and I consider it grand. I have shown it to several of my friends, and each and every one of them pronounce it beautiful.

H. E. G.

A WAIF OF THE BALL.

'Tis only a little rosette, so blue
It might vie with the tint of a cloudless sky;
It dropped from a dainty dancing-shoe,
At a County Ball, in the days gone by.

'Twas one of those fanciful things, you know,
Tacked on to the shoe with a silken thread,
And perched like a bird on the wearer's toe,
As she tripped to the dance, light as fairies tread.

I had been introduced, you must understand,
And I saw there was room for another name
On the card she held in her white-gloved hand,
And I pressed for the favor ere others came.

She smiled, an approving smile methought,
As the glance met mine of her deep blue eyes
When she turned to me; and her breath seemed fraught
With the perfume of flowers 'neath tropical skies,

As she answered me, "Yes, 'tis a galop—the last;"
"I must leave you now. You will not forget?"
The next was a waltz. As she glided past
Then fell at my feet this small rosette—

A mere bit of ribbon—a waif of the ball;
And I hid it away, lest the loser might see
When 'twas missed from the shoe so dainty and small;
And she smiles sweet as ever—but not upon me!

—S. T. OLES.

Facetiæ.

A cooking club—The rolling pin.

Enforced civility — Bowing to circumstances.

The artists' adieu to his picture—You be hanged.

The physician's motto—Have patients and you will succeed.

The proper way to warm the house is to keep the cellar cooled.

When is man like a perfect chimney? When he doesn't smoke.

It has been asked when rain falls, does it ever get up again? Why, of course it does, in dew time.

In the first transports of delight the happy father rushed into the room, exclaiming, "I've got a son; it's a boy!"

For an example of pure and unalloyed contempt, take a barber's opinion of the man who is growing a full beard.

When a man gives you his hand he does it out of friendship. When he gives you his foot it is quite another matter.

A writer in Harper's commences a poem with the line, "Some day I shall be dead." It is, indeed, a beautiful thought.

Two twin brothers are said to be so much alike, that they frequently borrow money from each other without knowing it.

A little fellow, who had never eaten frosted cake, asked at the table for a piece of that "cake with plastering on it."

The old proverb, "Where there's a will there's a way," has been revised to suit the situation. It now reads, "When there's a bill we're away."

A St. Louis man saw a painting of the enchanted palace, with all the guards fast asleep, and ejaculated: "The house is pretty old-fashioned, but the policemen look natural."

A little fellow quietly watched a bee crawling on his hand, till it stopped and stung him, when he sobbed: "I didn't mind its walking about, but when it sat down it hurt awful."

Hostess—"What, must you go already, professor?" The Professor—"My dear madam, there is a limit even to my capacity of inflicting myself on my friends!" Hostess—"Oh, no—not at all, I assure you!"

Skinny Men.—"Wells' Health Renewer" restores health and vigor, cures Dyspepsia. $1.

When a man "mysteriously disappears" nowadays, his friends don't begin dragging the river or casting around for a murderer until it is known how his books stand and how much money he has borrowed.

"Rough on Rats." Clears out rats, mice, flies, roaches, bed-bugs, ants, vermin, chipmunks. 15cts.

A person in Colorado writing to a Minnesota journal, says that the miners are very much discouraged in that region; they have to dig through a solid vein of silver four feet thick before they reach the gold.

A Southern legislator is actively advocating a bill requiring the name of the physician who attended the deceased to be engraved on the tombstone. The consternation this causes in medical circles may be imagined.

"Mother Swan's Worm Syrup" for feverishness, restlessness, worms, constipation, toothless. 25c.

A Missouri paper wants to know who can endure being hawked at with the black beak of envy?" No one, sir. No one can tamely submit to such a thing. And if any man ever looks at us with the black beak of envy, we'll bite him with a dog, if the lurid talons of retribution smite us with the red bolt of vengeance from the dripping jaws of the cloud of hate the next minute. Yes, sir.

Consumption Cured.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 149 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.

Superfluous Hair.

Madame Wambold's Specific permanently removes Superfluous Hair without injuring the skin. Send for circular. Madame WAMBOLD, 36 Sawyer Street, Boston, Mass.

A MEETING of the stockholders of the Continent Publishing Company will be held at the office of said Company, in the city of Philadelphia, on the twenty-sixth day of March, 1883, to elect officers and vote upon an increase and preference of stock.

By order of the Board of Directors.

Jan. 25, 1883. H. W. B. HOWARD, Sec'y.

☞ When our readers answer any Advertisement found in these columns they will confer a favor on the Publisher and the advertiser by naming the Saturday Evening Post.

NERVOUS-DEBILITY

Vital Weakness and Prostration, from overwork or indiscretion, is radically and promptly cured by

HUMPHREYS' HOMEOPATHIC SPECIFIC No. 28.

Been in use 20 years, and is the most successful remedy known. Price $1 per vial, or 5 vials and large vial of powder for $5, sent post free on receipt of price.

Humphreys' Homeopathic Medicine Co., 109 Fulton Street, New York.

KIDNEY-WORT

Acts at the Same Time on Kidneys, Liver and Bowels.

HAS BEEN PROVED

The SUREST CURE for

KIDNEY DISEASES.

Does a lame back or disordered urine indicate that you are a victim? THEN DO NOT HESITATE; use Kidney-Wort at once, strugglers recommend it and it will speedily overcome the disease and restore healthy action.

Ladies, as to your sex, such as pain and weaknesses, Kidney-Wort is unsurpassed, as it will act promptly and safely.

Either Sex. Incontinence, retention of urine, brick dust or ropy deposits, and dull dragging pains, all speedily yield to its curative power.

☞ SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS. Price $1.

KIDNEY-WORT

"Mr. Ethan Lawrence, my townsman," says Dr. Philip C. Ballou, of Manchton, Vt., "was bloated from kidney disease. The skin of his legs shone like glass. Kidney-Wort cured him." Apr. 29-82.

KIDNEY-WORT

IS A SURE CURE

for all diseases of the Kidneys and

—LIVER—

It has specific action on this most important organ, enabling it to throw off torpidity and inaction, stimulating the healthy secretion of the Bile, and by keeping the bowels in free condition, effecting its regular discharge.

Malaria. If you are suffering from malaria, have the chills, are bilious, dyspeptic, or constipated, Kidney-Wort will surely relieve and quickly cure.

In the Spring to cleanse the System, every one should take a thorough course of it.

☞ SOLD BY DRUGGISTS. Price $1.

KIDNEY-WORT

"Tell my brother soldiers," writes J. C. Power, of Trenton, Ill., "and all others, too, that Kidney-Wort *cured my 20 years' liver disorders.* Publish it, please, in St. Louis Globe-Democrat."

KIDNEY-WORT

FOR THE PERMANENT CURE OF

CONSTIPATION.

No other disease is so prevalent in this country as Constipation, and no remedy has ever equalled the celebrated Kidney-Wort as a cure. Whatever the cause, however obstinate the case, this remedy will overcome it.

PILES. THIS distressing complaint is very apt to be complicated with constipation. Kidney-Wort strengthens the weakened parts and quickly cures all kinds of Piles even when physicians and medicines have before failed.

☞ If you have either of these troubles

PRICE $1. USE Druggists Sell

KIDNEY-WORT

Another Bank Cashier escapes. George H. Horst, Cashier of Myerstown, (Pa.) Bank, said recently: "Kidney-Wort *cured my bleeding piles.*"

KIDNEY-WORT

THE GREAT CURE

FOR

—R-H-E-U-M-A-T-I-S-M—

As it is for all the painful diseases of the

KIDNEYS, LIVER AND BOWELS.

It cleanses the system of the acrid poison that causes the dreadful suffering which only the victims of Rheumatism can realize.

THOUSANDS OF CASES

of the worst forms of this terrible disease have been quickly relieved, and in short time

PERFECTLY CURED.

PRICE, $1. LIQUID OR DRY, SOLD BY DRUGGISTS.

☞ Dry can be sent by mail.

WELLS, RICHARDSON & Co., Burlington, Vt.

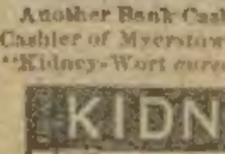
KIDNEY-WORT

"Kidney-Wort has given immediate relief, in many cases of rheumatism, falling under my notice."—Dr. Philip C. Ballou, Monckton, Vt. Apr. 29-82.

"I never found even relief, from rheumatism and kidney troubles till I used Kidney-Wort. *Now I am well.*"—David M. Butler, Hartford, Wisc.

MONEY $10 in Genuine C Paper Money and 60 of the most valuable Secret Recipes known, all for 50 cents; or Recipes and $25 C Money for 25 cents. Now is your chance. No postals. Address,

E. B. CALLENDER, Nashua, Iowa.



Bevel Edge Cards, designs for 1884. Send 10c. for 20 Chromo Cards with name on. Latest yet. Agents say: "Your goods sell best." Large Sample Book and full outfit 25c. Quickest returns. Give actual price. Clinton & Co, North Haven, Ct.

SILK PATCHWORK made easy. Kinds of all kinds in 100 Elegant styles; Send 2c. stamps for samples. Crown Silk Co., New Haven, Ct.

40 HORSESHOE, HAND and BOQUET, CHROMO CARDS, Name on, 10 cents.

C. W. BROOKS, Jamaica, Vermont.

50 All New Chromo Cards for '83, name on 10c, or Gold and Silver 10c. J. B. Husted, Nassau, N.Y.

$1.35 SEEDS FOR 50 Cts

BURPEE'S SEEDS ARE WAR-

CUBAN QUEEN 103 LBS. WATER MELON

Equal, None Better. To induce thousands of new customers to give them a fair trial we will send for 50 cts. one packet each of the following new and choicest varieties: The CUBAN QUEEN WATER-MELON, the largest and best. The prize melons grown from our Seed, last season, weighed respectively, 105 lbs., 92½ lbs. and 82 lbs. $100 IN CASH PRIZES for 1883, for the five largest melons raised from our genuine Seed. Montreal Green Nutmeg Melon, largest on record, one melon weighing 53 lbs., the past season, and of luscious flavor. We offer $250 IN CASH for three largest Montreals grown this season. New No. 2 Cabbage, very early, a sure header of fine quality. Giant White Italian Onion, grown to weight 2½ to 4 lbs. each, mild and productive. We will pay $25 CASH PRIZES for largest of these Onions. BURPEE'S CLIMAX TOMATOES, the best of all Tomatoes, certainly the climax of perfection. New Perpetual Lettuce, finest lettuce for family use, as one sowing will do for whole season. Japanese Nest-Egg Gourd, of great value to every poultry keeper, may make very best of nest-eggs. Egyptian Beet, earliest, improved Hollow Crown Parsnips, best parsnips. Golden Globe Radish, beautiful perfect shape, quick growth. Perfect Gem Squash, very prolific, fine grained, sweet flesh, wonderful keeper. Spinach, new thick leaved, round. Early Snowball Turnip, very early, both skin and flesh white as snow, most delicate flavor. All above are full, regular size packets, with illustrations and directions for culture, printed on each packet.

A REMARKABLE OFFER! The above 13 packets at usual prices only $1.30. We will send the entire collection by mail, postpaid, to any address for ONLY 50c. or 4 collections for $2.00, and we will put in each collection, free of charge, a sample packet of BURPEE'S MAMMOTH WHITE SURPRISE CORN, and a sample of the wonderful NEW WELCOME OATS, heaviest and finest Oats ever sown.

FOR $1 we will send above splendid collection of 25 varieties. ALSO one packet each of the following: New Prolific Tree Beans, most prolific known. 1175 Beans having been raised on one plant. Burpee's Superior Large Late Flat Dutch Cabbage, standard for whole. New Dwarf Round Purple Egg Plant, earliest, smoothest everywhere. Round Yellow Danvers Onion, one of the best. New Amber Cream Sweet Corn, of delicious sweetness, produced fifty good ears from one hill. Danvers Carrot, smooth and handsome. Spanish Mammoth Pepper, new, very large, sweet, mild. Burpee's Extra Early Pea, earliest and the best extra early. New Lemon Pod Wax Beans, marvellous beauty, fine quality, immense productiveness. London Long Green Cucumber, excellent for table or pickling. Round Dark Red Radish, extra early, intense red skin and crisp, brittle flesh. Long White Salsify, a delicious vegetable. New Mayflower Tomato, early, smooth, bright red. The seeds named above amount to $2.55 actual value, but the entire lot will be sent, postpaid, to any address for ONLY $1.00, and in addition we will give a sample packet of Burpee's Favorite Golden Dent Corn and celebrated Golden Grain Wheat, in all 60 packages. A complete Vegetable Garden for One Dollar, and all the finest ORIGINATORS of the system of offering valuable collections of Seeds for below usual varieties. We are cash, and we give to-day the greatest value for money, ever offered. We grow and paper these seeds in immense quantities. We know that all trying our seeds once will be regular customers.

$775.00 IN CASH PRIZES for 1883, to growers of best vegetables and farm products from Burpee's Seeds. Competition open to all. See catalogue for particulars. Show this advertisement to your friends and get them to send with you. 3 Complete Dollar Collections mailed for $2.50.

FLOWER SEEDS BURPEE'S GEM COLLECTION of Asters, Balsams, Pansy, Petunia, Phlox, Verbena, New Sunflower, etc. (20 packets), most beautiful flowers, with full directions for culture, for only 25c. This and the One Dollar Vegetable Collection, total 40 packets, all the finest named in this advertisement sent to any address for 50 Cts. STAMPS. ORDER NOW, and ask for BURPEE'S FARM ANNUAL for 1883, beautifully illustrated, a valuable book of nearly 100 pages, the only complete Catalogue published, embracing Garden, Field and Flower Seeds, Plants, Bulbs, Small Fruits, Thoroughbred Live Stock, Fancy Poultry, &c. Important Novelties of real Merit.

W. ATLEE BURPEE & CO. PHILADELPHIA, PA. Warehouses, No. 475 and 477 N. 5th St., & 476 and 478 York Ave.

34 PACKAGES NEW FRESH SEEDS FOR $1.00

RUSSIAN SUNFLOWER, heads 10 to 15 inches in diameter, excellent food for poultry, package 15c. HUNGARIAN CORN, the largest grain, smallest cob, and most productive variety in the world, Pkg. 25c. MAMMOTH CABBAGE, 20 to 30 lbs. each, Pkg. 25c. MAMMOTH PUMPKIN, have been grown to weigh 120 lbs., Package, 25c. SNAKE CUCUMBER, 2 to 6 feet in length, coils up like a snake, Pkg. 25c. SANGUINEUM, a tropical-looking plant, 6 ft. high, covered with bright red fruit, Pkg. 25c. CHOICE GARDEN SEEDS, 100 varieties, per package. Asparagus (Conover's Colossal), Beet (Early Blood), Bean (Golden Wax), Sweet Corn (Perfection), Carrot (Long Orange), Cress (Curled), Cucumber, (Green Classic), Lettuce (Silesia), Musk Melon (Nutmeg), Watermelon (Mt. Sweet), Pepper (Sweet Spanish), Parsnip (Long White), Radish (Scarlet), Spinach (Round Leaved), Tomato (Acme), Turnip (White Dutch). SELECT FLOWER SEEDS, 100 varieties, per package) Petunia, Japan Cockscomb, Portulaca Sweet William, Portulacca, Pansy, Drummondi, Flowering Peas, Gilia, Fragrant Candytuft, Arctotis, Marigold, and Double Zinnia.

A SPLENDID OFFER!

I will send the above superb collection (34 pkgs., retail price $4.50). Now, choice seeds that WILL GROW, and the *Practical Farm Journal*, a neat 8-page paper, Monthly, for one year, all for $1; club of four $3. This is the largest and choicest collection of seeds ever put up in this country for the money, the postage costing 10c. Orders filled promptly. Remit by Registered Letter, or P. O. Order on Lyons, N. Y. *Be sure and mention this paper.* Address at once,

FRANK PINCH, Clyde, Wayne Co., N. Y.

"Mr. Pinch is perfectly reliable."—*Ed.*

"All who favor him with their orders will be honestly and fairly dealt with."—*L. W. Briggs, P. M.*

20 PACKAGES, your choice from above list, and Paper for 1883, only 50 cents; all post-paid.

Landreth's Earliest Cabbage

Ten days earlier than any other cabbage, and producing well-formed conical heads remarkably large size for so early a ripener. Whoever plants it will be amazed at its early maturity; and if he be a market-gardener, will be able to place it in the market ahead of all competitors.

We have reports of this variety reaching ten pounds in weight, remarkable considering its extreme earliness.

LANDRETH'S RURAL REGISTER AND ALMANAC, containing full catalogue of Landreth's Celebrated Garden, Field, and Flower seeds, with directions for culture in English and German. Also, catalogue of implements and tools, free of charge.

Price lists, wholesale and retail, furnished upon application. Landreth's seeds are in sealed packages, with name and full directions for culture.

D. LANDRETH & SONS,

Nos. 21 and 23 South Sixth Street, between Market and Chestnut Streets, and Delaware Avenue and Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

1883—SPRING—1883.

TREES

Now is the time to prepare your orders for NEW and RARE Fruit and Ornamental Shrubs, Evergreens, ROSES, VINES, ETC.

Besides many Desirable Novelties; we offer the largest and most complete general Stock of Fruit and Ornamental Trees in the United States. Abridged Catalogue mailed free. Address ELLWANGER & BARRY, Mt. Hope Nurseries. Rochester, N. Y.

AGENTS!

Your name printed on circulars, show-cards, wood-signs, etc., to assist you in selling *Lamberton's Safety Lamp Burner*—long needed; fits all lamps; gives large light; has nicked cone reflector; never puts it out; no blowing, or turning down wick; it puts itself out if it upsets; can fill it without removing from lamp; no wearing out screws or collars; it lasts ten years; sells at sight. Exclusive territory given for 10 years. Sample postpaid 25c. For circulars, etc., address The Phoenix Mf'g Co., 42 Merchants St., Newark, N.J.

CHOICE SEEDS! BEST OFFER YET!

For 25c. or Nine 3c. U.S. Postage Stamps I will send for trial 10 papers Choicest Seeds, growth of 1882, 50 to 300 seeds in each paper, and my New Illustrated Seed Catalogue. Double Rose Aster, (18 colors, mixed); Verbena, (from 100 kinds); Australian Dahlia; Phlox (16 colors); Petunia (12 varieties); Double Portulaca (8 colors); Perennial Larkspur; Double Zinnia (8 colors); Double White Centered Asters (6 colors); Ice Plant. E. W. GOODELL, Amherst, Mass.

50 Chromo Cards, best in the market, with name 10c. "Beautiful Decalcomanie Album" with 150 Pictures, 25 cents; 5 for $1. in.

CARD CO., Cheshire, Conn.

40 CARDS all lap-corner, Gilt Edge, Glass, Motto and Chromo, Love-letter and Case, name in gold and jet, 10 cents. WEST & CO., Westville, Conn.

"Over the Garden Wall," and 120 other Choice Songs and Ballads, words and music, entire lot 10c. PATTEN & CO., 47 Barclay St., N.Y.

LODER'S DIGESTIVE POWDER

Certain Cure for Dyspepsia or Indigestion, Heartburn, Sour Stomach, Fetid Breath, Constipation, &c. 50 and $1. mailed.

C. G. A. LODER, Apothecary,

1530 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.

AUTOMATIC ORGANS, ONLY $5.00. Circular free. Harloach Organ Co., Philada., Pa.

John Wanamaker's STORE

Everything in Dry Goods, Wearing Apparel and Housekeeping Appointments sent by mail, express or freight, according to circumstances—subject to return and refund of money if not satisfactory. Catalogue, with details, mailed on application.

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60 Gold Edge Chromo and New Visiting Cards, no 2 alike, name on 12c. E. HALL & CO., Meriden, Ct.

Correspondence.

M. M., (Phila., Pa.)—You have got a wrong idea of the matter.

INQUIRER.—No reduction in rates on account of not taking premium. See page 8.

WAITS, (Wash., D. C.)—According to present usage, "He drank" is the correct form of expression. Our great grandfathers said "He drunk," and some very old-fashioned people still adhere to that form.

ROUGE, (Highland, O.)—Your natural color having made so favorable an impression, it would be a mistake to change it, even if you safely could. But we believe such changes are never artificially made without some penalty; and as for you, we do not facilitate the making of them. We are for simple, natural lives that are true to the truth of things. We object to sailing under false colors.

J. J., (Wyoming, Pa.)—The strengthening or thickening of the upper portion of the windpipe, which forms the "Adam's apple," is common to men and women, although it is much more marked in the former. No reason can be assigned for this, except that the male is usually stronger than the female. There is no way of reducing this protuberance, when it happens to be too marked for beauty.

STUDENT, (New York, N. Y.)—An old cynic (who was entirely wrong) was asked what advice he should give a man about to marry. The advice he gave was contained in one word—"Don't." In this case it was very bad advice, but in the case of a young person about to make a profession of the stage, it is the very best. Except to those born in it, the life of an actor is a very hard one, and the reward scanty and uncertain.

COLLEEN, (Phila., Pa.)—If your statement of the case is a fair one, the young man has treated you very badly, and is not worthy of another thought from you. Even if it is true that some one has told him stories to your disadvantage, yet if he had a manly spirit, and really cared for you, he would not have believed them so readily. Be thankful that you have found out how unworthy of your affections he is, and do not waste another thought upon him.

YOUNG, (Benton, Ark.)—It is not customary to keep windows draped in mourning for any particular time, except in commemoration of the death of some distinguished person under circumstances which render his decease a public calamity. The shortest time in which it is at all permissible for a widow to put off the deepest mourning is at the expiration of one year after the death of her husband, and it is customary for her to wear deep mourning for at least two years.

CHAPEAU, (Mitchell, N. C.)—Hats were first made by a Swiss at Paris in 1404. When Charles VII. made his triumphal entry into Rouen in 1449 he wore a flat hood with red velvet and fur, mounted with a rich plume of feathers. Henceforward hats and caps, at least in France, began to take the place of chaperons and hoods. Hats were first manufactured in England by Spaniards in 1510. Very high-crowned hats were worn by Queen Elizabeth's courtiers, and high crowns were again introduced in 1783. A stamp duty laid upon hats in 1784 and in 1796 was repealed in 1811. Silk hats began to supersede beaver about 1835.

MARIE, (Henry, Ind.)—1. If a lady does not wish her escort to come in, she should dismiss him as civilly as possible. She is certainly not bound to stand talking at the gate until he chooses to go. 2. A lady must never directly ask a gentleman to correspond with her, because in most cases he would feel bound to do so, however troublesome it might be to him. 3. Not as a rule. If you do make such a present, a book, or something pretty, but of small value in itself, is most appropriate. 4. It depends on circumstances. If it is late, he should not stop for more than a few minutes.

MARONEY, (Sussex, N. Y.)—The question of giving engagement and wedding rings is so old that its origin cannot now be certainly determined. One account is that in making any bargain it was usual to give something as a pledge or token, and as nothing could be more easily carried about, or more securely kept than a ring, this became the token always given to bind the important engagement of marriage. Another explanation is, as the man in marrying the woman made her the mistress of his house, he handed her his ring, which in early times was used as a signet, in place of writing the name, and so denoted the trust and confidence he reposed in his bride.

DORRIT, (Shannon, Mo.)—It is not usual, under ordinary circumstances, for a young lady to make a present to a young gentleman whom she has only known for two months. The most appropriate thing, if you do make a present at all, is some of your own work. The next best thing is something pretty, but of small value, of a book, such as the works of a poet for whom you care, and for whom you would wish your friend also to care. We can give you no receipt to win his love. Make yourself as entertaining and attractive in every way as you can, but do not neglect your other friends, especially those of your own sex. You are quite mistaken in supposing you will die if the young man is not as much attracted by you as you are by him.

GEORGE, (Allegany, N. Y.)—The age of the earth is placed by some at five hundred millions of years; and still others, of later time, among them the Duke of Argyll, place it at ten million years, knowing what processes have been gone through. The following is their theory: Other planets go through the same process. The reason other planets differ so much from the earth is that they are in a much earlier or later stage of existence. The earth must become old. Newton surmised, although he could give no reason for it, that the earth would at one time lose all its water and become dry. Since then it has been found that Newton was correct. As the earth keeps cooling it will become porous, and great cavities will be formed in the interior, which will take in the water. It is estimated that this process is now in progress; so far that the water diminishes at about the rate of the thickness of a piece of writing-paper each year. At this rate, in six million years, the water will have sunk a mile, and in fifteen million years every trace of water will have disappeared from the face of the globe. The nitrogen and oxygen in the atmosphere are also diminishing all the time. It is in an inappreciable degree, but the time will come when the air will be so thin that no creatures we know can breathe it and live; the time will come when the world cannot support life. That will be the period of old age, and then will come death.

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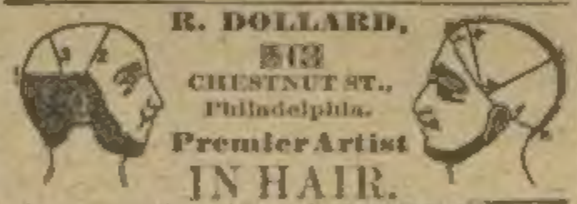

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